



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

1. The first part of the book is devoted to a general
 introduction to the subject of the history of the
 world, and to a description of the various
 countries and peoples which have been
 known to man from the earliest times.
 2. The second part of the book is devoted to a
 description of the various countries and peoples
 which have been known to man from the
 earliest times.

3. The third part of the book is devoted to a
 description of the various countries and peoples
 which have been known to man from the
 earliest times.

NEW NOVELS AT ALL THE LIBRARIES.

HESTER MORLEY'S PROMISE. By HESBA STRETTON, Author of "The Doctor's Dilemma," &c. 3 vols. crown 8vo.

"The best work which Miss Stretton has yet accomplished....we have read it with genuine interest.....The novel exhibits considerable literary talent, and has many passages in it of undoubted power and pathos."—*Echo*.

THE QUEEN'S SHILLING; A SOLDIER'S STORY. By Capt. ARTHUR GRIFFITHS, Author of "Peccavi." 2 vols.

"A very lively and agreeable novel....The incidents and chances of a soldier's life are told in cheery and easy style, the sketches of the different characters are very natural and life-like. Alured Frere, the hero, is a capital character, and we follow him through his varied fortunes in love and war with considerable interest."—*Vanity Fair*.

"An agreeable rattle of a book, with a genuine camp and mess-room flavour about it....Will obtain a ready welcome in every officer's quarters and military library."—*United Service Gazette*.

"A really good story....written with a good deal of humour and life."—*Examiner*.

"Well written....contains a fair amount of military adventure and mess-room chaff. Its chief merit is that it depicts a real instead of an ideal military career."—*Athenaeum*.

MIRANDA: A MIDSUMMER MADNESS. By MORTIMER COLLINS. 3 vols.

"There are pretty passages, and deft bits of female character, occasional shrewd sayings, and more than occasional gleams of what comes near to philosophy."—*Athenaeum*.

"A delightful novel....The book is like a brilliant panorama, with ever-shifting scenes, and a lively, sprightly, humorous company, all more or less amusing in their own particular line."—*Court Express*.

"We can recommend the book most strongly. There is not a dull page in it, and there is much that is of the very best quality."—*Manchester Courier*.

REGINALD BRAMBLE: A CYNIC OF THE 19TH CENTURY. An Autobiography. One volume.

"There is plenty of vivacity in Mr. Bramble's narrative."—*Athenaeum*.

"Reginald Bramble, from the introductory chapter of his autobiography to the concluding one, is the best of good company."—*Court Express*.

EFFIE'S GAME; HOW SHE LOST AND HOW SHE WON. By CECIL CLAYTON. 2 vols.

"Well written. The characters move, and act, and above all talk like human beings, and we have liked reading about them."—*Spectator*.

SQUIRE SILCHESTER'S WHIM. By MORTIMER COLLINS, Author of "Marquis and Merchant," "The Princess Clarice," &c. Crown 8vo. 3 vols.

"We think it the best (story) Mr. Collins has yet written."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

HENRY S. KING & Co. 65 CORNHILL, AND 12 PATERNOSTER ROW.

HEATHERGATE.

"Sir, I am descended from the ancient family of the Blanks, a name well known among all men of business."—*Spectator*, No. 563.

VOL. I.



HENRY S. KING & Co.,
65, CORNHILL; & 12, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

1873.

249. q. 542.

[All rights reserved.]

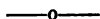
CONTENTS.

VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.	
	PAGE
THE STORMONTS	I
CHAPTER II.	
COUSIN TOM.	11
CHAPTER III.	
WHO HATH CONTENTIONS?	29
CHAPTER IV.	
SUMMER FOOLING	53
CHAPTER V.	
ST. MARGARET	89
CHAPTER VI.	
AUNT BARBARA.	127
CHAPTER VII.	
THE MAIDEN'S COVE	157

CHAPTER VIII.	
	PAGE
MASTER AND MAN	178
CHAPTER IX.	
CHANGES	201
CHAPTER X.	
THE RESULT OF MISS CLAVERS' MEDDLING . . .	228
CHAPTER XI.	
FELLOW-PASSENGERS	252
CHAPTER XII.	
"WOED, AND MARRIED, AND A'"	274

HEATHERGATE.



CHAPTER I.

THE STORMONTS.

TOWARDS the latter end of the eighteenth century, James Stormont and Marjorie Spens were united in holy matrimony, and settled down in the village of Heathergate, in the north-east of Scotland. Born of Presbyterian parents, James Stormont's secession to the Episcopalians was so bitterly resented by them, and by almost all his relatives as to cut him off from intercourse with his family for many years. One exception was found among them in the kinsman by whose influence he was considered to have made the change. A man of weight among the adherents of Episcopacy, who, while he repudiated the charge of having influenced his cousin's judgment, joyfully accepted him, charged himself with the completion of his studies, and procured

for him the chapel at Heathergate—a plain unadorned edifice, which certainly was guiltless of gathering its weekly congregations by any outward appeal to the senses; together with the duty of reading the service and preaching, once a week at the neighbouring town of St. Mary's. The pecuniary advantage of this arrangement was small, and the fatigue very considerable, whether he walked those six miles to and fro, or rode them in all weathers on a rough country pony; but as there were included in the gift a house, garden, and field, James and Marjorie, with youth, health, and a cheerful trust in each other, made the venture, nor ever regretted it, although the most rigid economy had to rule their household. In truth, his being a clergyman, gave her young bridegroom a sacred character in Marjorie's eyes, and she felt honoured by his choosing her. Unlike her husband, she sprang from an old Episcopalian stock, numbering Romish priests and Episcopalian clergy among her kinsfolk; and would often tell that she recollected, as a small child, sitting in an inner room with her mother and some others belonging to

“the persecuted remnant” of Episcopacy, while her father and four other men were in the room with their minister, only permitted to hold the service with so many. The hard laws had the usual effect of such enactments; those who had suffered from them held faster than ever to the proscribed worship, and Marjorie’s love for her Church was intense, so were her belief in the divine right of kings and of the injustice done to the Stuarts, although in her secret mind there was an illogical persuasion that the country was better without them. So these two young people, at the respective ages of eighteen and twenty-three, settled down to their life-work, in a pretty pastoral country, among kind and generous if somewhat patronising gentry, substantial farmers of various degrees, and their cottars; the minister to perform the service in the morning at St. Mary’s, in the afternoon at Heathergate, to marry, christen, catechize, his scanty flock, and when they died to read the burial service in the house of death, its public use being still forbidden; the mistress to economize their income, and

add to it by disposing of the dairy produce and linen yarn spun by the two young maidens whom the circumstances of her family led her to employ, and minister as she could to her poor neighbours.

I must not omit another duty which the minister was called on to perform, the rather that it was connected with a circumstance which afterwards coloured the fate of some of his family. Those were pedantic times, at least we call them so, when it was deemed correct for every country gentleman to show his erudition by congratulating or condoling with his friends, as the case might be, in a Latin epistle; and those who, like Mr. Ogilvy, of Heathergate, had neglected their classics or forgotten them, demanded this suit and service from the chaplain when necessity arose.

It arose on the occasion to which I allude, when, shortly after the Stormonts came to Heathergate, Ellen Ogilvy, the laird's only daughter by his first wife, eloped with a handsome man who came to lodge at St. Mary's, and whose acquaintance she made

during her visits to her mantua-maker. He called himself Captain Greville, but was a strolling player, of the name of Smith. The laird swore, raged, and, regardless of Mrs. Glass's prudent advice, talked of horse-whipping both lovers; made quite sure of the validity of their marriage by sending Mr. Stormont after them to marry or remarry them; forbidding him, when he would have interceded for them on his return, to mention their names to him. It was not a legitimate season for condolence, yet the inevitable letter came from his nearest neighbour, fraught with heathenish consolation, and the proud old laird, disdaining silence as a mark of cowardice, fell back on Mr. Stormont's Latin, happily never looking whether his extremely improper remarks had been rendered into classical imprecations, and so letting the chaplain's very mild translation of his wild curses pass. The minister had spent his days until he came to Heathergate among scholars and authors, and had held his own among them; gentle and courteous, his manner recommended him personally among the gentry, who revered

his sacred calling beyond anything we can conceive in these days.

A son named Hugh, a daughter Marjorie, called always Menie, again a son John, and in succession two daughters, Euphane and Violet, came to this happy couple; and while they were children, all, so far as the parents were concerned, held a tolerably calm and even course.

They were days of far stricter discipline than these, and Marjorie was a staunch conservative. She ruled her household in awful supremacy. The happy child-life among the woods and fields had darksome shadows; and when the delightful afternoon "through brake, through briar" was extended too long, or resulted in torn raiment, there were other results of pain and woe to the wanderers. The smallest appearance of dishonesty in word or act was strictly inquired into, and if discovered met its deserts, as did disobedience, impertinence, and other heinous crimes. On these occasions "mamma's" step, slow and deliberate, yet sure as fate, was a sound of dread to the young sinners; while to the

sick child both step and touch were hailed with perfect trust and delight; for to the invalid no indulgence within her limited means was too much to grant, no self-denial too great to practise. "Papa's" presence was ever sought; in the garden the small children toddled beside him, and poured out many a childish fancy to his ear; no less did his wit charm them when grown older; his learning was believed in to any extent, his songs were demanded with eager entreaty, and listened to with ever fresh delight.

Men tell us that women, even in this second half of the nineteenth century, are poor uneducated creatures, and that a spirit of slumber is only passing away from the public mind on this and kindred subjects. In the early years of the century, and in the remote region where our story is laid, the Miss Stormonts would have been considered well enough educated if they could have read well, sung their own country songs, written a very indifferent hand, and done white seam and flowering. Hugh's love for Menie had led him to cultivate

her mind so far as to read with her the British Classics as they were called, and all the current literature of the day, and to bring out her powers of writing and composition, so as to make her an interesting correspondent during his absence from home. An industrious student at college, his fame had won him the post of tutor to a young man of family; but Menie's scribbling, with which the ample sheet sent to him once a month was charged to the very seal, found no favour with her active matter-of-fact mother, and the "idle off-put" of time had to be made up by double diligence in the household work. As she drew near to Hugh in sisterly sympathy and affection, so did the quiet, sensible Euphane to her next brother, the thoughtless, lively John, who of all the family had suffered most in his character from the effects of his mother's stern rearing. Less open and more timid than the others, the fear of punishment made him inclined to concealment; a love of ease and enjoyment broke down the higher principles his

father instilled ; while his very handsome person, and attractive manners made "the young doctor," as the country people called him, even when his medical studies were far from complete, a dangerous guest, not only among the farmers' daughters and young ladies of St. Mary's, but even to the belles who sometimes came to "The House" in the summer, and taking the "Minister's Jock" as a target for the arrows of flirtation, found him as well up in the art as themselves, natural talent supplying the place of careful study. The first real trouble in the Stormont household came from his career at Auldtown, and many a tear did Euphane weep before he went into the surgery of an old family friend in St. Mary's, pending an appointment which should take him away altogether. Many a tear, too, had his early playmate Annie Cathcart shed for the same cause, all in secret, as in secret she cherished the fond hope that having given to her his early troth, that wandering, volatile love of hers would one day return to his allegiance,

nor ever leave it again. It was hard to believe this while every new favourite had his homage, but she loved on and believed on; and Euphane was her true friend, cheering her heart by her prophecies of Jock's ultimate steadiness and success, although no words passed between them concerning Annie's special interest in him.

The last of this family group is Violet, her mother's spoilt darling. The bequest of a friend enabling them to give her twelve months at a boarding school in Edinburgh, and her father's kinswoman, the widow of a professor at Kirkaldy claiming a visit from the girl on her way home, she is on the point of returning, when our story commences, at the age of seventeen, to her home, as lovely a fairy as ever stole a man's wits, as thorough a coquet as if Paris bred her instead of Heathergate.

CHAPTER II.

COUSIN TOM.

"My dear, I am thinking of going into St. Mary's to-morrow to meet Violet at the coach, and then I can call at the Cross Guns, and see if Sanderson will make me a bode for the oats in the Nether Park; they look well, and I would fain sell them to advantage."

"See that you make a better bargain, then, than you did with Jock Butchard about the calf. But, my dear, how do you mean to bring Violet out?"

Convict the minister of an error in his grammar, or a false quantity in his Latin, he would smile, and see, and amend it, for it was a very rare circumstance that he failed in either; but question his shrewdness in bargaining, or the worldly wisdom he so much lacked, and he roused at once.

"I mean to drive Wallace Wight in

Peter Poste's gig; the bairn would not like to come out with cart. But, my dear, you should not let your memory retain such trifles as the sale of that calf; especially as you prevented it even when the man assured me he was bidding its full value."

"Kae! and you to believe him, notwithstanding what the Wise Man said anent buying and selling! Ah weel, Jock Butchard would have had gude reason to boast if he had gotten the calf at the price he asked. If ye could but be persuaded that other men are not so ae-fauld as yourself!"

"Charity, charity, Marjorie hinny! I do think your speech savours of suspicion and ill-judging of your neighbour."

"Jock Butchard was ne'er neighbour of mine, and I know well he tried to take you in. And, maister," she said suddenly, "you would not be the well beloved of us all as ye are, if you bore not this trust in your fellow-man in your own true heart. But I maun remind you that you are also not to be self-confident, and it is some-

thing like it to speak of driving that skeigh brute in the gig. Are ye sure of him coming down the Gallow Hill, and the nasty turn at the Saughie Brig? You'll get the first sight of the bairn whatever."

A light firm tread and cheery voice cut short further colloquy; and Tom Fordyce, the minister's nephew, after the usual greetings, tells that his errand is to offer to bring Violet from St. Mary's to-morrow.

"If she comes back as she went away," he says, "Violet is too genty to come home with any of the farm people or with Miss Silver, who is coming to the House to-morrow. The lassie should feel she is looked for, after being so long away, and John has not his time at his own command."

The proposal was welcome to the mistress, and, be it confessed, not wholly unwelcome to her husband, whose misgivings concerning the conduct of Wallace Wight and the possible danger to his Violet mingled with his anxiety to get the first sight of her well-loved face.

Tom stayed to tea, and under cover of Mr. Stormont's reading the *Advertiser* aloud to his wife, spoke thus to his eldest cousin, "Menie, I have got a gig and horse to bring Violet out from St. Mary's, to-morrow. I hope you know it is to please you I am doing it. You said she would not like to come any other way, and you were afraid of your father driving Wallace Wight."

"I am much obliged to you. Mother would have spent a miserable time even if no ill had come of it, and the bairn will be glad, very glad, to see you! Mind though and say at once why you are there, or she will fear something amiss with father or John."

His answer was a low satirical laugh; Menie coloured, and went on answering something which had not been spoken, unless by that taunting laugh.

"Violet has very quick feelings; and, Tom, let there be no mischance, such as throwing down the horse, or skailing yourselves into the Saughie Burn, nor,"—and she gave him a glance which showed how little she dreaded this chance,—“nor falling in love with my sister's

bonny face, and leaving me to wear the green willow."

" 'Cruel sister lend me your hand,
Binorie, oh ! Binorie,' "

he hummed in a low tone. "I'll need to look out that Violet is not found in the milldam down by, if that comes about Menie. Menie Stormont, just as like as you are to do so wicked a deed, am I to leave my own true love for the bonniest face on earth, be its owner who she may. Good night, uncle ; that was a most interesting piece you read from the *Advertiser*, my aunt approved it much, for I saw her nod her admiration and assent. Good night, aunty ; by this time to-morrow night you will have your bonny dove back in her nest."

"Mind and see Sanderson about my oats, and be careful coming down the hill,"—and with this charge Tom departed.

Menie opened the door and walked out into the open air. "It was not right of him," she thought, "to jeer that way at my mother sleeping while my father read to her, and it was not civil to say that I would do like the cruel

sister in yon song. Stupid nonsense! I wish it would not rhyme so in my head. I will say it over, and get it out of my mind at once.

“ ‘ He courted the eldest wi comb and knife,
Binorie, oh ! Binorie ;
But he lo’ed the youngest abune his life,
By the bonny milldams o’ Binorie.
He courted the eldest wi broach and ring,
Binorie, oh ! Binorie ;
But he lo’ed the youngest abune a’ thing.
By the bonny milldams o’ Binorie.’ ”

It is gone now—and the bad spirit with it I hope. How bright the moon shines, and the winking, shimmering stars ! How long will it be before I look upon them in the East, where folk say they are tenfold brighter than we see them here. I shall look upon them, and think of father and mother, and Hugh, and all of them ; and Tom will be to me instead of all I left behind. Oh, I wish I were to go with him instead of waiting behind for ever so long ; but it must needs be, and the longest day wears to the gloaming, and so will this trial.”

She went in, and slept the sleep of youth and

health, but her waking thoughts coloured her dreams, and she saw in her slumbers palm-trees and palaces, amidst which she wandered looking for something she had lost. The palaces and trees were gorgeously beautiful, and bathed in the clearest moonlight; yet the sense of ever seeking, never finding, kept on through that dream, as it will in most dreams.

The morning came without a cloud.

“The hour so bright, so sweet, so gay,
Wafts good fortune on its way.”

And Tom made such a bargain with Sanderson as his uncle could never have achieved. It was still a couple of hours until the time when the coach generally arrived, so he went to call at John Stormont's lodgings, to see if he were in, but had not reached them, when a sweet gay voice said behind him, “Our trusty and well beloved cousin, Tom Fordyce, unless I mistake;” and he turned to see the loveliest girl he had ever looked upon! It was Violet Stormont, with her a young lady to whom she introduced him as Miss Silver, Mrs. Ogilvy's niece, a pretty

girl enough in other company, but ordinary looking beside Violet, who went on in the same style, "The Rhymer is still under the fairy spell. It is not the Fairy Queen, however. True Thomas! nor did I come hither in Mab's chariot, but in the chaise of my kind friend, Miss Silver. Many thanks to you, dear lady, for I hope now to be at Heathergate as soon as the coach shall rattle over the plain stones, if my cousin will wake up from his trance, and drive me in the gig we saw at the inn. Let us remain with you until the Heathergate chariot comes for you."

"I suppose it is useless to ask you to drive out with me, when you have so good an escort. Mr. Fordyce, of Fordyce?" she asked, looking at the young man.

"No, madam; his very remote poor kinsman, waiting for the appointment he has promised."

He coloured up under her careless, insolent look, and said, "Come, Violet; I see the laird's chariot, and we must be going. Allow me to see you to it, Miss Silver."

He handed her in, saw her maid and lapdog beside her, and when she was

seated to her mind, she leaned out of the window to say to Violet, "Adieu, dear friend; recollect our agreement. I am to see a great deal of you, and you are to prepare your good father and mother for my going soon and often to see them. Be assured you bear away half my poor heart," and she grimaced as if in languid pain. "Tell Mr. and Mrs. Stormont I saw their eldest son lately looking very well."

"I hope Hugh will be with us in a few days. My sister wrote he would spend a week at Heathergate, previous to going to England with Mr. Chisholm. Adieu, dear Miss Silver; accept my warm thanks for all your kindness."

The carriage drove off; the humbler gig came out, and as soon as Violet was perched up beside her cousin, and they had driven off, followed by many admiring eyes, he began to say,—

"Yon young lady is a grand romancer, Miss Violet—given you half her heart has she," and he mimicked her languid tone. "If I were her joe I would not thank her for the

reversion. It's a silly thing for women to fall in love with one another is it not?"

"Oh, Tom Fordyce, what a sentiment! We are capable of the deepest—most—most—undying attachment to each other. I know I feel for Miss Silver just like what I learned in my school-piece:—

“ ‘ Oh ! when my friend and I
In some thick wood have wandered heedless on,
Hid from the vulgar eye, and sat us down
Upon the sloping cowslip-covered bank,
The eglantine smelled sweeter, and the rose
Assumed a dye more deep . . .

Oh ! then the longest summer's day
Seemed too, too much in haste : still the full heart
Had not imparted half.' ”

“ That's very bonny, Violet, and I like to hear you repeat it; and I care not whether Miss Silver falls in love with all the women in the world, so long as you are not so silly, and our Menie loves me. By the bye, do you know that Menie and me are promised, and I am going to India to push my fortune; and then she is to come out to me so soon as we can make the pot, or whatever is its outlandish representative there, boil; and we are to

be as happy as the day is long and true lovers deserve to be? I say, Violet, could you sit a little round, and turn your face to me, I can hear what you say better when I see you?"

"I dare say, Mr. Fordyce; but it is just as well to let you know at once that I see your drift. Do ye think that no one has told me I am bonny? Many a one; and also I know," and she looked down demurely, "that beauty is only skin deep,—a fever or the pock may take it away; and it is also a snare, making young lasses light, and young ladies inconstant. I, do indeed, or ought to do, for my cousin, Mrs. Anderson, told me so often; and then somebody said, I think it was Captain Silver—— But what matters it what he said, even if I could mind it? And, Tom Fordyce, curiosity is a mean habit of the mind, which I feel it my duty not to encourage. And so Menie's promised to you. Well, I think you were not blate to ask her, so superior as she is; but if you get on in India, she'll be getting diamonds, and gold, and shawls, and muslins,

and rubies, and all manner of jewels ; and she'll see that beautiful country, full of palaces and palm-trees, and black folks bowing before her. Oh, I wish I were her !”

“ That you are not, Violet,—as unlike as possible.” And he deemed it necessary to look into her face, and make an inventory of all her features, to compare them with the absent love ; truth compels me to say, not without giving Violet the palm.

“ There is one thing in which Menie is very unlike you. She is never one to care for any jewel but her true lover's heart.”

“ I dare say ; but, then, you see I have not one to prize, and the old lady at the Pinnacle Hill showed me some diamonds and rubies, such as I would very well like my true love to give me along with the other inestimable treasure you mentioned. But, Thomas, all this time, though I guess from your blythe way they are well at home, yet I would like to hear how they are—papa's asthma, mamma's rheumatism, and your mother's headaches ? There's the Saughie Burn, and, I declare, my father and Menie ! To think of their walk-

ing so far. Oh, it is fine to be at home again, and everybody so glad to have you! Quick, Tom, let me out! Father! Menie!" And the darling of her home was welcomed with warm affection, yet with Scottish reticence, and the party walked on, Thomas leading the horse slowly beside Menie.

"Saw you ever such a beauty, Tom? I can scarce think it Violet. What a pity for such loveliness to shine only in this out-of-the-way spot! She looks like a young queen."

"She is a great beauty, Menie, and will set many a heart aching, and she's affectionate and kind too. I did her wrong when I jeered at her being so easily made anxious as you supposed. She nearly leaped out of the gig when she got sight of you, and rejoiced so to be at home once more. That silly thing, Miss Silver, brought her from St. Johnston's in her chaise, and is fairly in love with her; and, Menie, she has met Captain Silver in Kirkaldy, and the lassie Silver is planning to see her constantly."

"What matter! my mother lets Violet do

much as she likes, and all here will be so dull and tame, that the young lady will be a great ally for her; better than that she should be disgusted with the homely neighbours at once, or spoiled by Miss Smith, who always minds me of a spunk among brush, ready to set everything in a blaze. The lady is so fond of everything bonny, and will be sure to send for Violet to the House whenever my father goes there; and when he is closeted with the laird, madam's favour and Miss Silver will shield her from Ellen's ill nature."

If hereafter the conversation took a more personal turn, this chronicler is far too discreet to reveal it; but leaving the pedestrians to reach Heathergate, will follow the laird's coach up to the house, where Mrs. Ogilvy and the laird's granddaughter, Ellen Smith, the child of the runaway marriage, stood waiting to receive Miss Silver.

"So glad to see you all and Heathergate again! My uncle well I trust? Ah, gone out is he? Spicer, mind my parasol and dressing-case. How well the old room looks!

You have added to your Indian cabinets, and moved the settee out of the window. What was I going to say? Let me see. Oh, auntie dear, I have met Violet at her old relative's, the Professor Anderson's widow you know, and she is just a darling beauty. You will so admire her. I brought her in my chaise from St. Johnston's to St. Mary's, where my lovely sylph was spirited away by a stout satyr, and I shall dream of the lovely thing until I see her again,—my bonny bird!"

Madam Ogilvy looked an inquiry that was intended to convey haughty indifference. She felt bewildered, and wished the laird was in to tell her what Maria Silver meant, but Miss Smith said sarcastically—

"Translated into mortal language, Mrs. Ogilvy," for the lady was not her grandmother, only the laird's second wife, "it means that Miss Silver has a new fancy. She is riding her hobby as usual, with Violet Stormont on the pillion behind her."

"I wish you would hold your peace, Ellen

Smith, unless you can speak more sense. Maria said she brought Miss Violet, and very kind of her too, in her chaise, she said nothing about pillions."

"Well, madam, the whole matter, as my stupidity gathers it, is that on reaching St. Mary's, either the minister's Jock or Tam Fordyce met Violet, and took her to Heathergate, a distance we will fain hope that may be traversed soon and often, so that Helena and Hermia may love or squabble to their heart's content."

"Enough said, Ellen; cease your yammering, and see if Maria's room is ready for her."

The young lady, whose position since her mother's death and the partial relenting of her grandfather, had been one of outward comfort, but of much snubbing and setting down (a state in fact best described by an old nurse as getting "the bite and the buffet with it"), did as she was bidden, saw that the room was in order, then threw herself into a chair, and covered her face with her hands, thinking bitterly, "Always this beauty or the other favourite of some kind! Maria Silver I

thought loved me, and now she is gone over to this girl she used to care about so little. Wretched Ellen; who cares for you? Who? We'll see; we'll see." She looked up, and met Miss Silver's gaze fixed upon her.

"Nelly, Nelly! at your old tricks again,—fancying all manner of dismals! I love you very much, and want you to love and help me," and so saying, she shut the door, and sat down.

"Come here, Ellen. I have asked Madam to let you sleep with me, and I want your advice and sympathy. Oh! by the way, Harry sent his regards to you, and he is bringing a friend to fall in love with you. Harry was smitten by Violet when he met her a few weeks ago; but his flames burn a very short time, and, poor fellow, he is too much in debt to marry without a fortune. Now tell me about Hugh Stormont, whom I saw at my cousin Sir Hector's, with his pupil. Is he coming to Heathergate for any length of time? I want to take some lessons in Latin from him."

"Lessons in Latin! What can have put that into your head, Miss Silver? You have

routh of everything, and need not trouble your head with anything but dress and amusements. You should leave learning and accomplishments to the Miss Stormonts and me, who may have to be teachers some day."

"Never mind ; I feel my ignorance, and want to improve myself, and I believe I can induce Mr. Hugh to oblige me for the few weeks I am likely to be here ; but I wish to manage it myself, without the interference of Madam. I think I heard Violet say he would be at Heathergate to-morrow. Have you heard ?"

"No ; I seldom go there, for I am not fond of a Stormont of them, excepting the minister ; and he bothers me with his good advice whiles—advice that always tastes like one of grand-papa's hearings, diluted with much water ; and Jock—I like Jock, because he is a Pariah like myself, pelted with everybody's censure and advice. However, leaving it to my own natural sagacity to find out why Miss Silver wants to improve her mind all of a sudden, and to oblige her, I can make an errand to the Stormonts, and hear about Hugh."

CHAPTER III.

WHO HATH CONTENTIONS?

THIS intention she carried out in the morning, and came into the midst of the Stormont party just at the close of the early meal. The mistress was washing up her tea-things in a wooden bowl in the common sitting-room, while the elder daughters sewed industriously at homely needlework, and Violet bent over her lace cushion, twisting and untwisting the bobbins with her fingers; the minister reading with spectacles on nose, ever and anon glancing with secret pride to one and another of his children, as the click, click, of the needles was suspended for a moment, or Violet's pettish little interjections over her entangled web arrested his musing.

"There is Ellen Smith past the window. Oh, mother, let me carry away the bowl and towel!"

"Na, na! Mony a time has Miss Smith seen me at this work, and Madam is fain

to tell how her own mother aye washed their tea china. They were our weddin' set, and would never have lasted so long if the lasses had had the washing of it. She will be for the black hen's eggs I promised her granny."

"More likely with some message for me from Miss Silver," suggested Violet.

"I wish she may bring the new book the laird promised me the sight of—a poem about the Goths in Spain, that his brother the advocate wrote about, and was to send him," said the minister.

A soft quick step trod on the gravel walk, a soft quick hand lifted the latch of the door, and Ellen was among them. She tapped slightly at the sitting-room door, but gave no time for permission to enter, before she was in, and had begun to open the subject which she intended to use as a blind to her real object.

"The laird did not get the parcel my granduncle promised yesterday, Mr. Stormont; it will not come now until the carrier goes in again to-morrow. Meantime here is the

magazine with a notice of it. Mrs. Ogilvy hopes you have not forgotten the eggs she bespoke, Mrs. Stormont, for she has set her mind upon them. You are early at work, Menie and Effie, and busy. 'The hand of the diligent makes rich,' and I hope you find it so."

The girls coloured. Euphane, with a hasty glance towards Violet, said, "I should have no objection to make money by my work, Miss Ellen, but this is only to help another person to be rich, we hope. John has got an appointment in Newcastle with an old doctor in good practice, and a half promise that he is to succeed to the business if it suits him, so we are making his linen ready."

"To think of that! Jock going to England! What will Annie Cathcart say to that? What will all the lassies in St. Mary's do without him? And how dull you all will be when Hugh and he are gone, and Menie may be away too! When is Hugh to go back to his situation, and is there any chance of his coming here on his way?"

"Hugh is at Auld Town, and we are look-

ing for him to-morrow. The continuance of this war is keeping his pupil and him from going on the Continent, and Hugh is to have a fortnight or three weeks' holiday, a week of which is over. We are glad John and he will meet before they are to be parted for a long while. Have you seen the lace work, Miss Ellen? Violet brought it home with her. It is tedious, but the half-yard she has done is gey bonny——”

“Oh, Violet, you'll need to come up to the House, and let Miss Silver see that; she is so fond of new things, and new people, too. Happy girl! she can afford her fancies as 'she can afford her new frocks; she values her gowns and her friends pretty much alike, when the whim is on her: linens and callimancoes and winseys for a change—humble friends and hopeless admirers in a walk of life below her; but her real liking is for velvets and satins, and jewels and gold, and folk of her own degree. If you will lend me a basket I will take the eggs now, Mrs. Stormont, instead of letting Tibbie Gowk come for them. She is a grumbling carline,

but she says she thought much of my mother, so I will save her the walk."

So saying she only waited for the 'eggs, and then left the house, but encountered John Stormont, who turned to walk with her, while Marjorie the younger said, "Gowk! Is that Tib's name? It is a queer one! I never, I think, heard her called by it before."

"When your father and me came to live here, my first servant's name was Gowk. She was Tib's daughter, and when she brought her to me, I said like you, 'That is an unco name;' but the lass said, 'There's a heap of Gowks in thae pairs.' And 'deed I was not long before I found out I had one of them. I never thought I could have learned her anything; but the lass was honest and willing, and after a time she became a most useful servant, and bode with us several years. Ye must mind her by the name of Kirstin. When John was an infant she had a sore trouble, and left with some of the revenue officer's wives about St. Vigean's that were going to America. But see, there's

Jock back. Put by, and let me hear his news about the place at Newcastle."

John came in laughing and excited, apologising to Violet for not meeting her at the coach, but supposing she preferred Tom's escort.

"I can tell you he thinks not a little of you, and I see he was not so far beyond the mark as I thought, when he called you a beauty. Ye are really a bonny lass.

"Hoot toot, mother; it's all nonsense looking so scandalized. Violet's heard it before, I'll warrant; and I daresay, knows by this time what value there is in young men's compliments. I'm sure I should know, for I have tried all kinds of flattery, and find none so telling on the fair sex as that of their looks. Father, you know Minerva herself fell out with the other divinities about looks, not about their mental powers."

Both parents looked their displeasure, and John contrived to change the subject to the war—to an interesting operation—to the prospects of harvest—and, finally, to his own departure.

"It is settled then you are to go?"

"I am to leave St. Mary's in ten days, and in a week after I hope to be in England."

"And, John, my man, laughing and joking are all well in their place, and your father and I were never, as you know, averse to our children being cheerful and gay in reason, but I am sorry to hear a son of mine speak lightly of flattering young girls, and misleading them, especially one who is as good as promised. Take the word of an old woman, John, such practices come never to good. In all the daffin' of young folks, profess no love you do not feel. They tell me now young folk are gey licht in making promises and breaking them, but surely Hugh and you will aye mind your father's example and counsels."

"Keep me, mother! the times are changed since my father won your heart by singing about Phyllis and Corydon and Paridel; and I think, if my memory serves, there was inconstancy in the end of that pastoral. If I were to try 'Oh what had my youth with ambition to do?' where would I find the

Amynta to share my sentiments? eh! Violet? I appeal to you rather than to Menie and Effie, who are both far wiser than Minerva. Did the captain offer to exchange his sword for a crook, like one of Miss Grace Baillie's daft entertainments, with her green bowers and fountains and nymphs, not from Arcadia, but the Grass Market. It's only those Bedlamites that would believe in the buds and studs and rubbish that Marlowe's lover offered to his dearie. Well, well, mother, I see you are real angry, so I will just own that there is no love of the present day to be compared to your true love; not one of the lasses, even Violet, that can hold a candle to yourself,—so will that content you? And, Euphane, you might just see me down the brae to the smiddy, where I left the doctor's nag."

Euphane rose, and went out with him, not forgetting to take him to task for vexing his mother.

"Vex my mother, indeed; then, Euphane, unless you help me, I doubt she will be worse vexed than for a few fule words. I

have had a quarrel with that thrawn idiot Luddy Gowk, who is stopping with old Mistress Reid. He is real dour, and she is a clyping body, and if it comes round to the doctor's ears, he is such a preceese sorra he will tell the other old boy at Newcastle, and I may lose my chance there, or at least go to my new hunting-field with a name for quarrelling. I did not like to ask Menie myself, she is always so hard on a poor fellow; but will you ask her to get Tom Fordyce to bring Luddy round? He minds him because he was so good to him at the school. And I say, Effie, have you any spare cash?"

The girl's face was full of tears, as she promised to do what she could; and having apparently anticipated the request for money, handed over to him her slender store, saying:—

"Oh, John! you will promise me to turn over a new leaf, and bridle your temper, and not indulge in what I doubt led you to this quarrel. What happiness to me to hear that you leave all your old habits behind

you, and begin quite a new life, and send, may be, for Annie, to keep a fine new house !”

“Tuts, there’s time for that ! But, Effie, you shall see or hear when once I get away from these preposterous idiots, and gowks—that was the way the quarrel began, you see. I was vexed at his being at tea with old Mrs. Reid at the Cathcarts, and Beenie and Annie listening like the bewitched etherts they speak about, to his blether about foreign places, and frae less to more I said ‘he was Gowk by name and gowk by nature,’ and he bit his lips very hard, and turned round in a hurry, and his elbow came against my shoulder ; and I will tell you the truth, Effie, I was not tipsy, only just a drappie in my e’e, as the song says, and in a minute I gave him a clout on his nose. He gripped hold of me, but auld Auntie Cathcart and Mistress Reid skirled and tugged at him, and bade me leave the house, which I did. I woke this morning with an indistinct recollection of what had happened ; my landlady looked very black, and gave me a note signed Joan Reid, bidding me come

and speak to her. I was very unwilling, but for fear of worse coming of it I went up, and a fine hearing the old cat gave me. It was only respect for the family, she said, that would keep her from speaking, and that unless I would shake hands with Luddy at once, she would tell my father and the doctor all about it. Luddy looked sulky enough when she called him, but he put out his hand and I shook it, and he said he owed too much kindness to my father and Mistress Reid to make more about it; but just get Tom to clinch it, and in one week he will be away to the sea, and I will be in Newcastle. I saw him, I am sure, up by at his granny's when I walked a piece with Miss Smith. I would not care if it were not for vexing my father; and see, I have just a little score to pay, and by the time I come home again, I'll have gold in gowpens, and pay you back three times over. Ye are a good sister to me, Effie, and I'll owe you a day in ha'arst for this yet.

"But, John, will there be any fear of Gowk falling out again?"

"I think not. I'll keep out of his way ; and, besides, I feel real ashamed of myself, and do not know how to face the Cathcarts. Walk a piece farther to the smiddy, and then I'll mount my horse, and ride in at once, and bide in the surgery all the evening."

Euphane did as he asked her ; saw him mount his horse and ride off, and then returned to take counsel with Menie.

"Oh, Menie, you will ask Tom to bid this fellow not injure poor John, by telling about that he was tipsy, and struck him. You know Dr. Brown is most precise, and if he thought it right, would insist upon letting the doctor in Newcastle hear about our brother's weakness. I am not excusing him really, Menie ; and I told him how wrong it was of him. But after all, you know the laird, and Glenmore, and Pittrundles, and all the men about, think little of it, and make jokes about being fou ; and I am sure they say Captain Silver and his friends drink very hard. See, there's Tom coming in by the planting. Speak to him about it."

The request was at once complied with,

and the whole matter so lightly treated by Tom, that the girls felt a measure of comfort return to their minds.

"I doubt very much," he said, "if the Newcastle doctor would care a pin for hearing it; but it might send Jock there at a disadvantage to have suspicions put out, so I'll speak to Ludovick, who will do anything for me ever since I fished him out of the milldam."

Tom was himself a perfectly sober man; but, to tell the truth, even he did not hold the prevailing habit of drinking in the light of a crime, although he knew enough of John's violence when drunk to be willing to interfere with his influence over the other man.

Euphane went into the house, concealing as she best might her trembling state, while Tom and Menie took several turns up and down, the girl rejoicing in his endeavours to soothe her fears with promises of at once seeing Ludovick, and returning in the evening to tell how he had succeeded. "And Menie will you say to Violet, that Mrs. Reid is to

you, and begin quite a new life, and send, may be, for Annie, to keep a fine new house!"

"Tuts, there's time for that! But, Effie, you shall see or hear when once I get away from these preposterous idiots, and gowks—that was the way the quarrel began, you see. I was vexed at his being at tea with old Mrs. Reid at the Cathcarts, and Beenie and Annie listening like the bewitched etherts they speak about, to his blether about foreign places, and frae less to more I said 'he was Gowk by name and gowk by nature,' and he bit his lips very hard, and turned round in a hurry, and his elbow came against my shoulder; and I will tell you the truth, Effie, I was not tipsy, only just a drappie in my e'e, as the song says, and in a minute I gave him a clout on his nose. He gripped hold of me, but auld Auntie Cathcart and Mistress Reid skirled and tugged at him, and bade me leave the house, which I did. I woke this morning with an indistinct recollection of what had happened; my landlady looked very black, and gave me a note signed Joan Reid, bidding me come

10	10
11	11
12	12
13	13
14	14
15	15
16	16
17	17
18	18
19	19
20	20
21	21
22	22
23	23
24	24
25	25
26	26
27	27
28	28
29	29
30	30
31	31
32	32
33	33
34	34
35	35
36	36
37	37
38	38
39	39
40	40
41	41
42	42
43	43
44	44
45	45
46	46
47	47
48	48
49	49
50	50
51	51
52	52
53	53
54	54
55	55
56	56
57	57
58	58
59	59
60	60
61	61
62	62
63	63
64	64
65	65
66	66
67	67
68	68
69	69
70	70
71	71
72	72
73	73
74	74
75	75
76	76
77	77
78	78
79	79
80	80
81	81
82	82
83	83
84	84
85	85
86	86
87	87
88	88
89	89
90	90
91	91
92	92
93	93
94	94
95	95
96	96
97	97
98	98
99	99
100	100

aye said that sae far as his licht went Mr. Stormont was a weel disposed man. My young dochter Nanse, naething wad suit her but gaen intil service at the Ha' Hoose to help the chalmer-lass. Yer mither was at hame then, and fell kind to her, an' at the very time she was in hands with yer faither, Captain Grayfuil they caed him, and Nanse I doubt bringing letters atween them, Mester Ludovick cam' hame frae the navy as, they caed it; it but to be some place that was like a big loch, for I mind when he gaed first till it the laird cursit the water, no only in the hoose, but oot in the roads up and doon, till it was awsome to hear him, and his mither fell into the dwams, and said aye he would droon (she was but a peekin' body), and frae less to mair deed or he gaed awa'! Awa' he went whaiver; and he had been back and awa' again, and syne he cam', oh, ill betyde the time! My Nanse was a clever lass, halesome and fresh coloured, and he was an idle hempy, and he swore till her he would marry her, and mak' a ledly o' her. She aye said it, puir bairn! What are ye

lookin' yon gate at me, Miss Eellen? She was turned awa' in disgrace by the hoose-keeper; and he gaed awa', they said, and was to be marriet upon an English lass—oh! wae-sock! My Nanse was the mither o' yon lad ye saw the day, and my man he took an awfu' oath that she suld never darken his doors agen; but that we wad gang awa' to some pairt whaur they didna ken naething about us. Somebody tellt the bairn, and she raise up in her fivver, and gaed doon or they could stop her, and was drooned in Gairie; and then Saunders he lost his heed, and aye maunted, and caed himsel' a' the murderers that ever hung; and then he deed no a seven days after Nanse. I culd no bide the sicht o' the laird, or any about the Hoose; but what help? And the laird himsel' cam' doon and said he would gi'e me the Laigh Cottage and my cow's grass, and pay for the bairn. Kirstin,—she was an unco woman, my Kirstin! she said it behooved her to return good for ill, and a year after she would gang up and nurse the captain's young wife that lay ill o' the pock, with her new-born babe; for ye'll

no hinder but he was killed a few months after his marriage at the wars in foreign pairts. They say he was heizin' doon the enemy's flag in a fort, whate'er that is, and ain o' his ain men pappit aff a gun at him by mistake. The servants were terrible frichtened at the pock, but Kirstin bade wi' the leddy till she deed, and her bairn, and syne cam' and said I would do richt weel wantin' her, and she took service wi' ane of thae revenue folks' wives at St. Vigean's, and gaed aff wi' her to England; and then I heerd o' her in Ameriky, no frae hersel', but somebody in Glasco' wrott mair nor aince, and sent me some siller frae her; but I hae na heard this good whiles, and maybe she's deed. I canna help it gin she is, and it's 'owre lang syne I saw her for me to mourn muckle. The laird, ye may believe, was awfu' angry, and awfu' sorry, and he has niver let me want sin syne. He caused steek the Ha' Hoose, and gaed awa' to forrin' pairts for a year or twa; and syne he cam' back, and brocht this Madam Ogilvy, but she has na had nae bairns. Mester Hasty, in St. Mary's, aye paid for

Ludovick's lear at the schule, and he was boarded wi' Mistress Reid; but the laird has never spoken till him nor notissed him ony wye. When he behooved to do for himsel', he choosed the sea, and was sent in ships till Riga; noo he says he is a mate, and soon will hae a ship o' his ain. Now, Miss Eellen, ye hae the story, and gang yer wa's, for ye're keepin' him frae comin' in. What think ye o' Luddy Gowk for yere ain first cousin?"

"How dare you call him so, you dreadful old crone? So that's your story, and a very poor one after all. Good-day to you, - and here is the shilling. I expected something better for it. Everybody in St. Mary's, I dare say, knows it," Ellen said.

"What an odd story!" she thought. "An uncle! I never knew I had an uncle. My mother never spoke of him. Ma'ried! And if that baby had lived, I might have had a cousin almost my own age,—the age of that young ruffian clodhopper! jolly tar! old Tib's grandson! They have kept this fine story from me, and never mentioned my

uncle. Stay, stay! There *is* a picture in my grandfather's closet, with the face turned to the wall. I saw *that* the day I found the door unlocked, when he came upon me, and boxed my ears, and bade me begone. That must be my uncle—Captain Ogilvy—was he a captain, or an admiral? No; he must have been too young for that. I must see that picture. Secrets from me! I warn you, you two old people,” and she shook her clenched fist, “you need not attempt it. There never was a secret yet but I could fathom it.”

“Gang yer ways, Miss Eellen,” was Tib's thought. “Ye got this oot o' me; and, barrin' the laird's anger, I care na' by. It's a queer warld. Yer ain father was nae great present, my bonny woman; and what for was na my Nanse a leddy, and syne ye wouldna' hae flouted at her son. My certy! Your cuzen the heir! Ye wad hae set your cocker-nony at him sune eneuch. Queer tho' the lass never heard the story the hail kintra rang wi'. But, let's see; it's an auld story. Luddy's two-and-twenty year auld; and, Miss

Eellen, ye're near upon four-and-twenty age; and they brocht new servants a' wi' them frae where the leddy came frae, and her maid's an English lass, so that none should ken it. But she'll no' tell upon me, and Luddy's sune to be awa' again. Are you for off now, lad?" she said, as the young man lifted the latch, and called out a rough, cheery 'good-bye.' "Sorra be in your cuzen Eellen's tongue that keepit ye from comin' in by. But what for did ye no come in?"

"Granny, ye know very well that the laird has said to Mrs. Reid and Mr. Hasty both that it is his pleasure I should not meet his family in any way; and I owe him too much not to study it. If it were not to see an old friend or two, granny, I would never be in this place again. It is very hard upon a chap; but there are fine places and fine things beyond the seas; and I wish I might give Miss Smith the amber beads I brought home."

"Gie them to me, lad, and I'ze gie them till her; for she's kind whiles to me, and I needna' say ye sent them."

"We will wear." And though out of place in our story, it may be said that old T. got the amber beads and gave them at Miss Brown's next visit. Ellen's love for personal adornment, the gratification of which made so part of her relatives' treatment of her, outweighed the danger of their being discovered in her possession.

"I must find some way to account for having them before I wear them," settled the matter in her mind.

CHAPTER IV.

SUMMER FOOLING.

Tom returned, with the welcome intelligence that Ludovick had no intention of doing anything likely to injure John's prospects, although the provocation had been greater than John's partial account told them. Tom had gone from this interview to see John, and bind him over to keep the peace, and, if possible, to keep sober for the future.

"I am glad that tiresome fellow will be away soon," said Effie; "it will be so trying to Jock to have him before his eyes."

"Partiality makes you most unjust, Effie. *That* fellow is just as fine a fellow as ever stepped. I don't know his equal; and you ought to be ashamed to be so blinded."

"Hush, hush!" interposed Violet, who was present at the conversation. "Let Luddy alone; he may be as good as gold, but he is, you must allow, far from bonny, with his apple face and red hair, and a voice

that sounds always as if we were upstairs, and he was calling us to come down and escape from a fire."

This sally and her saucy beauty moved not Tom from his *protégé's* defence. He reiterated that there were few like Luddy, and was proceeding to prophesy that they must one day believe it, when the parents entered the room, and Violet covered the awkwardness of their detected excitement by thanking Tom for the part he had taken in procuring her a piano to practise on.

"It was very kind of Mrs. Reid. How came she to think of it?"

"Well, I was calling there, and she was wondering how you would keep up your music, and said she had an instrument belonging to her young friend Miss Malcolm, who died of the decline, and you were welcome to it. So I arranged with Tom Turner about bringing it out. I daresay it is no great thing, but it will serve to amuse you; and I hope you will let us hear it now."

He did not tell her, what he confided afterwards to Menie, that the old lady had

wished to sell the piano at a price beyond his present means ; but that a present of a small sideboard she coveted at a sale, presented to her by Ludovick, had made it necessary to depose the old-fashioned piano from its place in her small sitting-room. He rather doubted whether Violet, her father and mother, would quite approve of the affair. Instrument and performer were only too well matched, for Violet's instruction had been of a second-rate character ; nor had natural talent done anything to make up for it. Nevertheless, she played some reels and strathspeys more or less to the satisfaction of her audience, throwing out her hands and elevating and depressing her elbows much in the style of rowing a boat, as was the fashion of inferior players in those days. Her mother was chary of her praise, her father still more so ; but their reticence was made up by the good-natured praise of her sisters, and by Tom, into whose composition no note of music entered, exclaiming, that her performance was as fine as Monsieur Jouet's, the music teacher at St. Vigean's.

"Monsieur Jouet may have fallen off since I heard him," suggested Mr. Stormont.

"Well now, papa, let us have one of your songs : 'There grows a bonny brier bush,' or 'Wanderin' Willy.'"

"No, no. I will give you a song made by my old friend, John Skinner, and not near so well known as 'Tullochgorum,' but to my mind quite as well deserving to be popular :—

"In the downhill of life, when I find I'm declining,
May my fate no less fortunate be
Than a snug elbow-chair can afford for reclining,
And a cot that looks o'er the wide sea :
With an ambling pad pony to pace o'er the lawn,
While I carol away idle sorrow,
And, blythe as the lark that each day hails the dawn,
Look forward with hope for to-morrow.

With a porch at my door, both for shelter and shade
too,
As the sunshine or rain may prevail,
And a small spot of ground for the use of the spade too,
With a barn for the use of the flail :
A cow for my dairy, a dog for my game,
And a purse when a friend wants to borrow ;
I'll envy no Nabob his riches or fame,
Nor what honours may wait him to-morrow.

From the bleak northern blast may my cot be completely
Secured by a neighbouring hill ;
And at night may repose steal upon me more sweetly,
By the sound of a murmuring rill.
And while peace and plenty I find at my board,
With a heart free from sickness and sorrow,
With my friends I will share what to-day may afford,
And let them spread the table to-morrow.

And when I at last must put off this frail covering,
Which I've worn for threescore years and ten,
On the brink of the grave I'll not seek to keep hovering,
Nor my thread wish to spin o'er again.
But my face in the glass I'll serenely survey,
And with smiles count each wrinkle and furrow,
As this old worn-out stuff, which is threadbare to-day,
May become everlasting to-morrow."

"I like that, minister ; and I do not think I have heard it more than once before. It is superior to Tullochgorum, but I daresay folks' taste runs more to politics."

The "downhill of life" still lies below the parents' pathway, and they are willing to look towards it with the poet's eyes ; while to the younger people it is to come, after a life of unexampled prosperity : conquests and jewels

to Violet; fame and name to Tom; John reclaimed, and settled into a grand doctor to Effie; and then a very gentle downhill to all of rest and quiet. Menie has her hopes in the middle ground too; but she thinks of the last lines, and wishes, in her secret soul, that she could realize the life beyond, and desire it more. And then how many will be gone before she comes to the downhill of life, if ever! There are some people who never reach it, she reflects; but her musings were broken in upon by Tom's cheery voice,—

“If Hugh comes in the forenoon with the coach, why should we not all walk to the burn in the afternoon? Is there any objection, Mrs. Stormont?”

“None that I know of if the girls put on old dresses and thick shoes; but would it not be better to defer it until the beginning of the week.”

“No time like the present, my dear Marjorie. Let them go, and you and I will enjoy ourselves at home, and I will get my sermons looked over for the Sunday. Bring Jock out to the ploy, Tom.”

"Yes ; and," Effie proposed, "let us get hot water at one of the cot houses, and take bread with us and cups. Can we have Sandie, papa, to carry the basket?"

"And now who is going to see me down the road? You might all come just a little piece beyond the wood, and be back before bedtime."

Menie and Effie will go, but Violet refuses to go out, having a secret hope that her friends will yet come or send for her.

"It rained this afternoon," she said ; "and I am afraid of soiling my clean frock ;" and they laughed over the song of Bess the Gawkie, for a little ; but Tom was vexed, and could scarcely conceal his vexation, and said crossly,—

"Well, it *has* been wet ; you had all better stay in."

Menie lifted her eyes at the sound of his aggrieved voice, and said she was not in the least afraid of the damp : it did not rain now.

"Oh, why need you go so soon?" asked

Violet. "It is just the pleasantest time of the day;" and the young man stayed, talking and laughing, and watching Violet's fingers on the bobbins, until it was too late for the girls to escort him. Menie felt unwilling to remind him of his landlady's early habits lest she should be suspected of a wish to secure his company in a walk. Now Violet laid aside her cushion, and would have him hold a skein of silk for her! She must cover a pair of shoes with silk to match her blue ribbons. At last good-night was said, and Violet prepared for bed with a heavy heart. She could not understand why Miss Silver, "her darling Maria," had neither come to see her nor sent a message; and, indulgent as her mother was in general, she had positively forbidden her going up to the House until after she had appeared in the church on Sunday, and they knew whether Mrs. Ogilvy wished it.

"My dear, I have not lived here for seven-and-twenty years without finding out what we are expected to do and to refrain from doing. If Mrs. Ogilvy wants you she

is sure to invite you ; or later on, the middle of next week, I may be shall have an errand there, and will take you with me ; but I cannot have you fleeing off at once, until you are bidden."

So Violet took off her white dress, with its ruff round her beautiful throat, and shook loose her crop of sunny curls, in a despondent mood, while Effie tried to console her.

"Dear me, Violet, I just wonder you mind going up by to the House ; we shall get three times as much fun at Mrs. Reid's or the Provosts'. I'm sure I am just wearied to death when we go up, and the laird takes my father into his study, and Madam gives my mother a list of all her complaints and misdeeds of her servants, and she puts Menie into a state by railing at the education given to girls in the middle class, and their attempts at treading on the heels of their superiors, ending always by getting her to puzzle out a new pattern, or write a heap of her notes.

"It won't be like that when dear Maria is there. Oh, Effie, you should hear her play and sing. She is the most elegant, refined

creature, and her gowns are in such exquisite taste. She allowed her maid to make my crape which Aunt Anderson gave me, and you will allow when I wear it it is quite unlike a country mantua-maker's cut. She made Aunt Anderson's so pleasant to me. I don't think, to tell you the truth, her cousins liked her stopping at the Villa. Then Hugh came there once or twice with his pupil, and her brother came, and Sir Hector her cousin. I cannot say I admired him nor a Mr. Murray who came with him. They always talked about things I could not understand."

"Is Mr. Murray a lover of Miss Silver's?"

"A lover! No indeed, I should think not. He is thirty years of age or more, and like a schoolmaster, or a tutor, or something of that kind."

"Well, well, Violet; to come back to your getting to see your dear friend. If you have no meeting before, I am sure papa will take you with him on Monday, and if the lady sends down to ask 'Mr. and Mrs. Stormont and one of the young ladies,' you shall have my turn as well as your own."

Sleep now, as Bell used to say when we were little, for siller to buy a cow."

Meantime Menie closed the door of her closet, and sat down on its one chair in perplexed and sorrowful thought.

"I cannot help it! I cannot help it! I must see it. His heart looks through his eyes into her bonny face, and no wonder. Whether I go or come he does not care. You horrid lass, this is jealousy! and you that have despised the miserable, mean passion all your life! The very feeling shows whence it comes, for it gnaws like a venomed worm. Oh, leave me not to my own evil heart," she cried in anguish; "for there is nothing I might not do or say that is bad. I *cannot* say I am willing this shall be, but into bed I will not go until I can resolve not to say a word to him or her till I see if it is only my own jealousy."

The face in her glass was pale and worn, not a plain face, but certainly not like Violet's. "It's no just like yon picture of jealousy my father has in that book on the Passions, and its shameful of me to misjudge

Tom this way. It's not only that Violet has beauty, but she has a sweet loving disposition, and can accommodate herself to every one's pleasure. I WILL get over it, and if he be in love with her, I can—no I cannot;" and poor Menie broke down in a flood of tears; it was early morning when sleep surprised her, before she had effected the task she had set herself, but none knew of the struggle, nor noticed the heavy eyes with which she looked at next day's daily tasks. Tom's walk home was not free from a twinge of self-upbraiding, though his joyous, bright disposition cast off care, and evaded self-scrutiny, and he thought "It is impossible I can ever change from Menie, were Violet twice as lovely and fascinating. I do not well see how she could be that though. I never saw such eyes in a head—nor such a mouth! And then she is so sprightly and winsome, and has such lady-like manners. Menie is just a thought quiet, too shy and unpolished." The wretch forgot how a previous soliloquy on that very road had decided that her retiring, modest air was perfection. "Sup-

posing I had seen Violet as she now is before Menie and I were engaged! Supposing she had never left Heathergate! Oh bother it! 'If ifs and an's were pots and pans.' I shall be off to India, and when I come back Menie and I will be old married folk, and Violet will be—not Mrs. Silver I hope, for he's a wild chap. Better to have the laird of Dunure—no, he's too fond of the cappie—Patie Merry—no, no. I say, man! Luddy! where are ye off to at this hour of the night?"

"To secure my seat in the coach for St. Vigean's to-morrow; it's time I went to look after a berth as I have been long enough on land. I must away and see who'll take me. Nobody needs me here."

His tone was so sad that Tom wished he could speak comfort to him, but he knew there was much truth in the sentiment; still he felt impelled to say, "Toots, Luddy, I wonder to hear you! I'll miss you, only I am going away myself so soon; and my mother will miss you—she says it does her good whenever you look in at the Syde; and Mistress Reid will miss you greatly, and the

wee lame boy ye carry so often to the school, and poor old granny!"

"If I were drowned in the deep sea to-morrow there would be little moan made."

"I never heard you go on at this rate before. What has come over you? or who is there you would like to be sorry for you? I suppose those that have the greatest number of friends are never really mourned but by one or two."

"I believe I *am* low with living so long on land, and that makes me say these idiotic things to you. There's room for everybody in the world, I suppose, and something for everybody to do, and it behoves them that have few kin to make the more friends of fremd folk. Who knows after all but I may get some bonny young thing to care about my sailing or staying?"

"To be sure! Now you speak sense, like the fine lad I have always known you. Let's see! you're two-and-twenty I think; the lassie's wearing pinafores and in the school that is waiting for you till you come back, and build a fine house, and settle down for life.

“‘For worth and sense o’er a’ the earth
Shall bear the gree and a’ that.’

Good-night, and good luck to you.”


The morrow came, and the morning coach, which was to take Ludovick to St. Vigean’s, brought Hugh from the north. The meeting with his family over, its members saw that he looked older, and was far graver than he used to be; but Tom and Jock arrived in the early afternoon ready for the expedition, and there was no time for further investigation in the midst of the cheerful preparations. The boy Sandie was sent off with the basket to the cottage fixed upon, and they started on their walk of two miles, Violet’s desire to meet her friend not being proof against the charms of this expedition. Her mother had insisted on homely garments; but the pretty gipsy bonnet of the period, with its flowers near the face, was wonderfully becoming, and in keeping with it, she carried on her arm what was then called a cottager’s basket, as blooming a rustic maid as need be; she darted out and in, full of animation, and anxiety to be off.

"I have not been to the Burn for two years," she said in apology.

Tom in a fit of penitence walked with Menie ; and Violet and Hugh, with them at the beginning, had fallen a little behind, she telling and he listening to all her news from the time he saw her last at their grand-aunt's. "Miss Silver came to stay for a whole week, and Sir Hector called once while she was there. Is it true, Hugh, that he has turned Papist?"

"It is quite true ; and my father's old friend, Mr. Colville, told me on the coach this morning that he is painting a beautiful little chapel for him at his place, Denslade. Mr. Colville has been seeing his friends at Auldtown, and is here on a visit to his cousin at St. Mary's. Did any one else,—I mean, of course there were many other people at Aunty Anderson's while Miss Silver and you were there?"

"Many people while I stayed, for you know what her hospitality is, but not when Maria was there. Sir Hector's sisters did not like her staying there at all, and did me the honour to be jealous of me ; and Aunty Anderson was, I think, afraid to ask people for fear she



might not like them. There was a disagreeable elderly man of the name of Murray once or twice."

"An elderly man! are you sure? The Mr. Murray I take it to be is said to be most fascinating, and is certainly not old."

"Well this Mr. Murray is five-and-thirty if he is a day, and I thought him disagreeable because he talked about things I could not understand; and I yawned so that Maria said I had better take a walk to the shops, and try to match the silk we wanted. I was so glad; and when I returned he had gone. He called another time with a small book for her. I travelled home with her, and she is now at Heathergate House. Hugh," she exclaimed peevishly, "you are making me walk where the boughs catch my bonnet. Tom, a race with you—I must have the start—to yon whin, and our point shall be the rowan-tree beside the well. Jock, say, one, two, three, and away."

"There! I'm first in, you long-legged cousin!"

"I dare say, you little cheat, with such a

start. Why it was three-quarters of the whole way. Come along now, and see if you can keep up to my pace. Let Hugh and Menie have a spell."

"That spray of wild roses! I must have it. No; stay, come down, and we shall find finer ones near the river side. The blaeberries must be ready. Dear, how slippery the path is. Give me a hand: and now to ford the burn!"

"Step this way, on that stone; now wait one moment, let me guide your foot; hold my hand very fast. Stay, I will lift you over the bog at the edge. Now you are all right, and here is a famous bank of blaeberries."

"Now, Tom, tell me, when my father and mother are so kind to everybody, and always so friendly to Mrs. Reid, why we never have Ludovick Gowk to our tea-drinkings and parties, and Mrs. Reid never asks us to tea while he is there, though I recollect meeting him when we were children at other houses." This question followed upon Tom's account of his last night's interview.

"I suppose there is a reason for it. Per-

haps the laird, who educated him you know, and sent him to sea, would not like it; and you know your father's rule, never to cross the laird in things which are not what he considers absolutely essential; and perhaps your mother does not wish it."

"Poor Luddy! Well he *is* an awkward lout, and no great ornament to society. But look at the blaeberries! I am glad now mamma would not let me come in my muslin dress. Can you gather me some in a dock-leaf, and then we will fill my basket for tea. It makes my head ache," she said, after a few minutes. "Suppose I sit down on this stone, and you gather them; but where can the rest have gone?"

"They will find us before long. I wonder if we have come the right way. Never mind; we can look for them when the basket is full." And Tom made no haste to fill the basket, but found it necessary now and again to sit down to rest, until shouts were heard of "Tom!" "Violet!" followed shortly by a crackling of branches, and John crashing down the bank.

"Upon my word, you are a nice pair! Here have we been crying ourselves hoarse after you. What made you leave the right road?"

"The right road?"

"You must have known this is not the right road to get to the bridge, where we agreed to halt. Come along; the tea is ready, and we are as hungry as hawks. What a couple of idiots you are! This way to the bridge and waterfall! Well, how you went wrong, unless you intended it!"

He hurried them forward at such a pace that Violet exclaimed she must faint, and Tom had to support her as well as he could in the narrow paths among the trees. She fell lame, and had to lean heavily on his arm when they came out into the open slope by the hill-side. In this fashion they came in sight of their bourne, and amid Effie's condolences, and the general reproaches of Tom for his stupidity, the repast was spread, cream procured to be eaten with the bilberries, which Violet produced at once as a peace-offering and excuse for their wanderings.

Scarcely was the meal begun, when John

exclaimed, "A carriage on the bridge, and ladies in it. They are looking over upon us. They have stopped, and the man is driving away. They are coming down. One is—no,—yes, one certainly is Ellen Smith, and I suppose the other is your friend Miss Silver, Violet."

At once Violet's fatigue was forgotten, and Hugh rushed up the steep slope to hand Miss Silver down, while John assisted Miss Smith. A very striking and graceful figure was Miss Silver, in her green habit, richly braided with black, and her black hat with gold cordon and tassels, and green ostrich feather, as she advanced to the party with apologies.

"So sorry to disturb you, but indeed I cannot say my visit is unpremeditated. We have been looking for you at several points, and at length finished just where naturally we ought to have begun. We have been up to the keeper's lodge and down to the dairy, and here you are where we should have found you had we kept the main road. Ah, naughty Violet, where have you been

these two days? Mrs. Stormont said she caused your shortcoming, but Mrs. Stormont could not have known as you did how much I needed and longed for you. Oh pray, Miss Stormont, do not distress yourself. Ellen is kindly carrying my driving cloak, and I will sit here by this tree if you will allow me to join you."

"May I give you a cup of tea or some blaeberries? We have no wine."

"I thank you, I never drink wine; a cup of tea, since you are so kind. My old nurse used to say that they that come unasked should sit unserved, when Harry and I slipped out of bed, and begged to be allowed to join the supper she and my mother's maid were taking. Ellen, this is better cream than they have at the House! Shall I intrude too much (it is so charming here) if I send James to Robbie's Inn by the bridge, and bid him come back in an hour or so?"

She looked so gracious and graceful, that Menie and Hugh hastened to assure her that her stay would afford them all great pleasure.

Tom had been up to the cottage, and

returned with a shawl to spread on the grass for Miss Smith, and they sat round, a cheerful happy group. Violet nestled close to her friend, and slipped her hand into hers. The hour passed very quickly in light talk about the trees, the waterfall, the birds flitting to and fro, and the summer clouds of many hues, the legends of the country, and especially the legend of this place, with all of which Miss Silver was acquainted. Finally she suddenly began a song, sweet and clear, and the charm of her presence was complete.

“Up, quit thy bower ! late wears the hour,”

she sang, and the melody seemed born of all the fair things around her, stream, birds, and sky, and green foliage. It ended, and they begged for one, just one, more.

“It must be only one, indeed.”

And now it is “Craigieburn Wood.”

She stopped the applause of her listeners by springing to her feet, and calling on Ellen to return.

“The laird’s nap will be over, and he will wonder where we have gone ; but I

must not forget my errand. We called at your house to beg, on Mr. and Mrs. Ogilvy's part, that your father and mother, Mr. Hugh as the last comer, and Miss Violet as the next to the last comer, and my very good friend, will dine at the House on Monday, and that the other young ladies will come to tea; and your parents have promised for themselves and Violet, and conditionally for Mr. Hugh.

"My Violet, you look a little wan. Can I drive you home? Indeed we can make room, and Ellen will not mind, shall you?" she asked carelessly, "for going beside James."

"If they will allow me, I will stay and walk home with Menie and Effie, and Mr. Hugh can ride by James," replied Ellen. "But mind, I trust to your making an excuse that will satisfy Mrs. Ogilvy if she asks for me."

The tears were in Ellen's eyes as she spoke, and Hugh turned to say,—

"I am sure Violet would rather walk; and you will kindly excuse me this evening. I must spend it—my first at home for months—with my family."

"As you please. Perhaps one of the gentlemen will order James round to this side of the bridge, and we will walk up. Ellen, will you settle for me at the inn?"

John undertook to order the carriage, and offered his arm to Ellen, while, with very slow steps, Miss Silver prepared to ascend, attended by Hugh.

"They will take some time," she said, "Mr. Stormont, and meantime I shall sit down on this stump, out of sight of both parties. I have a request on my own part to make to you, and a letter to deliver to you for a friend: for the first, will you bestow some of your spare time just now to assist me in my studies? and now here is Hector's letter. I understand you to say yes to my request, do I not? Read the letter now, and tell me what you think of it. Well?"

"I must think it over; it is a great temptation. Dear Miss Silver, do you know how great a temptation?"

She blushed, and said, "Temptation I cannot call it. It is a fair offer, such as may come to any clever man at least once in his life—

the step of the ladder which, fairly taken, leads on to prosperity."

"Without reference to the guiding of his principles, religious or political?"

"You are very impertinent, I think. Take time; there is no immediate hurry in answering the letter. My cousin is coming next week, and Mr. Murray, a friend of his, to whom I shall be glad to introduce you; they may help your decision, if you will not allow my judgment to recommend your acceptance of the post. Now let us move on; we shall find another opportunity to talk it over during our studies; and Ellen Smith possesses in so remarkable a degree the quality of following up a trail, that I very often am tempted to wish her among the Dog Ribbed or the Chipewas."

He saw her into the carriage, and then came swiftly down the bank to join his party. Menie's voice was raised.

"I have been telling Violet, Hugh, that I am very glad you prevented her accepting Miss Silver's offer to make Ellen go upon the box. It is not nice for the laird's

granddaughter to ride by the side of James Allen, that impudent laddie just taken from the gutter. I wonder Miss Silver could ask it."

"She did not think," Hugh answered. "In fact, Menie, it is impossible for you to understand in Miss Silver's position how trifling such a thing appears. I am sure, had she thought, she is the last person wantonly to hurt any one's feelings. She looks on Allen just as a driving machine; and then the atmosphere of Heathergate is not one to rouse her kindly feelings, or make her patient with Ellen's provoking ways. Poor girl! I am tempted sometimes to doubt whether my father's mediation did much good, when it worked on the laird's feelings at her mother's death to bring her to his house; unless his influence could have prevailed to make her be treated as an Ogilvy, not as John Smith's daughter.

"At the same time," remarked Jock irreverently, "this grand young lady, if she looks on that transformed caterpillar as a machine, cannot look upon her uncle's granddaughter

and cross he was to Effie and you last night, because Ellen and Hector would make him intrude on you at the Colvilles', and because the air of Roselands never does suit him; but his friends must forgive him, and he promises to behave better for the future. I am a party to this amnesty, I can assure you; for he has been extremely cross to me, and I have only just forgiven him."

Then the conversation became general, and Harry acquitted himself to the satisfaction of all, as he well knew how, until they came upon painting and the picture at St. Mary's; and then it appeared that the cause of difference between the brother and sister had been that he blamed her for asking Miss Violet to sit for a picture which would be so widely seen, and Mr. Colville for venturing, in the interests of his art, to ask so great a favour.

Maria, with heightened colour, defended the cause of both, inadvertently, as it seemed, laying the fault on the great temptation of having so good a subject.

"I had my objections," said Mr. Stormont; "but after being at the first sitting, my dear young lady, I had no more to say. Nothing could be less exciting, and I have little fear of Violet being recognised in yon long garment and hood. It appears to me that Menie or Effie would have done quite as well, notwithstanding your partial flattery."

"I am not going to play Paris to these sisters, Mr. Stormont; but now you have seen how well-conducted we all are, you will just allow Hector and Harry to come in for ten minutes at the end of the sitting on Friday. We have a dispute, Hector and I, concerning Mr. Colville's treatment of the picture, and we need an umpire. Miss Colville, poor dear, though once quite competent to advise, is as blind as a bat; Colville is an opiniated idolater of his own school; and Harry's judgment is just so far good for something, that he really knows a good deal about art."

"Colville will not admit me, at least without your sanction, although he feels, I

think, that he cannot forbid Heck, whose picture it is to be. But if you withhold your consent, Mr. Stormont, I shall be tempted to say all that is in my mind, and at once protest against the picture ever having been commenced, or even at this point finished."

"In which case I, too, shall be tempted to say all that is in my mind; and wish you had stayed at Roselands, or Cheltenham, or Calcutta, or wherever your foolish protestations would do no harm."

"I see the fear of a family feud has prevailed with Mr. Stormont, and we may all three go on Friday, armed with his permission, as an 'Open Sesame' to Miss Colville's bars and bolts."

Next came a note by a special messenger from Mr. Colville, explaining the seeming breach of faith, and requesting that Mr. Stormont would permit Sir Hector to be at the next sitting. "Indeed, my dear friend," it concluded, "I do not see how we can exclude him from a sight of his own picture. I am not yet sufficiently ad-

vanced to be quite sure of my likeness without a further sitting; and it will be cruel of you to deprive me of the pleasure I have hitherto enjoyed, of hoping to associate a memorial of your lovely daughter with a work which is to increase the fame and extend the name of your attached friend and well-wisher,

“C. COLVILLE.

“P.S.—Miss Violet will favour me by an early visit on Friday; say ten o'clock.”

“I hope there will be no more bother about it,” he said to his cousin. “Really Violet is a beautiful girl, but Sir Hector and Harry Silver will not eat her.”

“Two-legged wolves do sometimes eat up poor Red Riding Hoods,” was the rejoinder.

Mr. Colville laughed, and made a sketch of Violet in a hood, glared at by a wolf, bearing the long nose and keen eyes of Sir Hector.

“If I had the brush of a great painter, my wolf would have been better looking,” said his cousin.

"You saw it then too, Mary? Poor child; her face lightened up like the hill-sides after rain, when the sun bursts upon them. I was thinking of asking her to bring her bonny face for a light into a dull house in Queen Street, but that sunburst said, 'No, Colin Colville,' as plainly as if her sweet mouth had spoken it. I have written to Stormont, and asked for an early sitting on Friday, and I shall try to finish all that I require before Miss Silver and her friends arrive."

Violet, sent to Tibby's by her mother, was met by Captain Silver, and to his astonishment declined his escort.

"No, I thank you, Captain Silver; I am in a great hurry to leave the parcel my mother sent to Tibby. Her cottage is locked up, and I must hasten back, for we have an engagement."

"Is the engagement at St. Mary's? May I not walk with you?"

"No, I thank you; my sisters are going with me, and my cousin Tom will bring us back at night."

"What a lucky man is your cousin Tom! You have adopted Maria as a friend, why will you not take me for one? I am sure we were good friends at Kirkaldy. You did not run away from me then."

"Your sister has been very kind to me, but mamma says I must not forget that there is a difference between us."

"I admire the truth of your mamma's remark, but cannot see how that is to prevent our being good friends. If you mean difference of fortune, Maria cares as little for that as I do; in all other difference the advantage lies with you."

"You are both very kind; but indeed mamma must know best, and she would not like me to walk with you. Let me pass, if you please, for I am in haste."

The girls set out on their walk, and Effie soon espied Harry Silver in the wood, coming up from the House at Heathergate, and pointed him out to Violet.

"Never mind; do not stop; we shall be late if we stand to speak now."

He crossed the road, however, and shook

hands with them, and walked by Menie's side until they got near to St. Mary's, then lifted his hat, and with a wish that Mrs. Reid had extended her invitation to him, left them.

"We shall have no peace now walking out, with that tiresome man joining us whenever he has nothing to do, and all the gossips in St. Mary's saying we encourage it. And, Violet, you never once opened your lips, but left all to Menie and me. It's a mercy there are such things as dogs and guns and muir-fowl, or we might have been a Quaker conventicle."

"Never mind, Effie; the 12th will soon be here, and then our friends will betake themselves to the moors, and we shall not be troubled with them. Not that there is not more in Captain Silver than in many of his kind, if he gave himself fair play, and would speak in a natural tone of voice," said Menie.

Mrs. Reid greeted them with, "You're late, young ladies. Come ben and get off your bonnets, and here is a friend waiting for you—Tom Fordyce, who, welcome as he always is, is doubly so to-night, for he brought me the

news of my Luddy's really gallant conduct. Fetch in the tea, Susy. Oh, my dear, I have said little about yon lad, because of those that would have it so ; but never I think could son of my own have been dearer to me, nor more kind and attentive to me ; and my old heart was near broken at his impressment. But speak Tom now, and see if they dinna think Luddy a hero."

"In the first place, I am told he could not have been pressed, being a mate of a ship."

Tom's story, divested of extraneous matter told how Luddy went over to St. Vigean's, as he proposed, when he came suddenly on a scene of great distress. A man was about to be carried into a boat by a pressgang which had captured him, amid the shrieks of his wife and children, and the unavailing anger of some old fish-women who, with his aged father, were the spectators. The men of the fishing village adjoining St. Vigean's were out at sea. Ludovick's heart was touched, and in the humour which then possessed him of being uncared for by every one, he offered himself as a substitute, and was at once accepted. As a

first class volunteer he was far more valuable than the man they had previously captured.

“I went down to the beach to take a boat to see him, but the frigate was off during the night; so then I paid a visit to the family he saved from such distress. The woman was not half grateful enough, thinking that because he was an unmarried man it was the less matter; but the old father was pleased enough. I thought it queer they never asked his name, and as I have a line from him to say he shipped by the name of Thomson, I am glad they did not. I can understand why he did this, for the name was always a hateful one to him, and with the new name and a new life I hope he will lose his depression, and make his mark in the world. My mother has heard from good authority that Captain Troil has been let know who he is, and will keep his eye on him for good. It will be a better thing than having to do with those men of hemp and tallow at St. Vigean’s and Riga some day, you’ll see.”

“I am sure it was just wonderful all the stories that were told about it here—from the

time that it arrived in the morning' with the fish-cart from Beachside, with the bare fact of his having gone in the king's ship, like a pheasant's egg, until with everybody's addition it was hatched and grown into a bird of rare plumage. Tibbie, poor body came in by a cart this morning to hear what I knew about it, and I was sorry for the creature, though 'deed she was very far from appreciating his goodness to her. It was her unkindness to him as a bairn that made them take Luddy away from her, and send him to me at a time when his board was an object. I see Miss Clavers coming down street. I wish she be not coming here. We must be prudent if she does; and now, Tom, mind I can have no sharp encounters with your tongues. Whatever she says, mind she is a lady, and your elder, and say nothing you will regret when you come to your prayers at night."

"Good evening, Mrs. Reid. Good evening, all of you good folk! You misses are a sight for sair e'en in the toon, except it be on the Sabbath, and then it's only the chaipple folk that enjoy the licht o' your countenance. This

will be Violet; well, lassie, I hear you are gey set up wi' auld Penty Colville seeking your picture for a saint or an angel, whilk is it? and twa offishers staring at ye in your white goon and things for wings till yer shooters. Miss Colville's lass tellt mine that it's just maist redeekless. Saint indeed! I said, 'the nearer the kirk the farrer frae grace' mony a time, but I did think that Mr. Stormont was one that acted up to the licht he has, so far as it goes, and would no hae gane in for these remnants o' the great apostacy. They say that Sir Hector McPherson's clean gane over till Rome, and that young Kilry, your brother's pupil, will no be far ahint,—may be Hugh too, for aucht I ken. Us soond Kirk folk ca' ye aye the middle hoose. I used to tak' your faither's pairt, but I kenna what I am to say noo; yon gangs beyond your organs and your ministers in cutty sarks, praying in other folks' words, printed in books."

"Another cup, Miss Clavers. I——"

"No, Joan Reid; but another knot of sugar. You've been very sparing. Did I see you with Maria Silver that other day? A prood peat! she



saw na me, although I kent her faither and mither weel; as bonny a woman as ever I saw, and he was a fine man till he got in with the Methodists. He's maybe owre strict, but he's soond, vera soond; and I'm just wondering how he'll put up with his dochter's ways; for I'm told by them that suld ken, that she's playing with Rome's pushon too. The general's in England, and like to be here before the summer's owre. I saw the captain wi' Sir Hector."

"Well, Miss Clavers, is he playing with the poison too?"

"None of your ill manners, Tom. No; he's owre licht to care for either kirk or chaipple. He's a terrible look o' his mither though, and is no an ill lad if he fall into good hands. Maybe his faither may influence him, or his wife. Ane o' the leddies at Roselands, I hear it is to be. Speaking o' Heathergate, Mrs. Reid, what's this story about Luddy Gowk? Auld Rob Fisher, that brings the fish frae Beachside, tellt Freeman, Colin Colville's man (set him up, wi' his body servant!), and he tellt a person that tellt my maiden, that the

captain o' the king's ship lying out owre frae St. Vigean's cam wi' a curn o' his men, wi' their cutlashes glintin' in the sun, awful to behold, and seized Luddy, and he resisted (he was aye a bauld loon), and they clappit airns on his hands and feet, and handit him frae the boat to the ship like a bag of 'oo'."

Tom's patience was evidently ebbing, but a look from the old lady kept him quiet, and a few words told Miss Clavers the true story, and blamed those who had practised on the credulity of her informant.

"Credulity here! credulity there! I think, Joan Reid, your story's far more unbe like than my lass's, and no half sae amusing."

"It's a shame, though, not to let Ludovick have the credit of his generosity. I wish when people do invent, they would invent good about their fellow-creatures; but they seldom do."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Tammas Fordis. Invent indeed! Now if it comes to that, let me tell you I think your story very like a whale, as the man said in the play I heard when I was stopping with my aunt in

George's Square. And ye'll be leavin' us too before long, I think you've not been in such a hurry. It's slow work hangin' in the skirts o' our fine relations. And how is Jock comin' on after his splore? He's awa' too! what will the young lassies do withoot their chief beau? Annie Cathcart's lookin' peewowin, but I tell her there's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, and want is no the warst dish in the kitchen—bad meat's far waur."

"I see a friend in the street, Mrs. Reid. I will just run down and speak to him, and come back for the girls. Good-night, Miss Clavers."

"Gude-nicht, and joy be wi' you a'. You're no an ill fellow, Tam; but you have a bad trick of interruptin' folk older than yoursel'. 'Deed, Menie," she added as the door closed, "ye're a fortunate lass enough as times go."

"I want you to look at these two gowns Morrison has just sent over for my choice. I am to wear it at my niece's marriage with Mr. Spiers, the writer, in Brighton," Mrs. Reid interposed.

"Your niece? Then, that's the lassie Scott.

And she's to get Adam Spiers, eh! He has fallen into the auld Shirra's business, and is a fine clever chield. How did she manage that?"

"Oh, it seemed he liked her when they were boy and girl; but he waited till he had a good home to offer her."

"That's the way! Some folk have their own share of luck, and others' also. And what are you going to do with your bonny face, Miss Violet? Which of all the beaux about are ye setting your cap at? Tam is bespoke," said the tormenter, as he entered the room. "The ministers are married men, by Patie Merry, and he's little buik; and there's no young doctors or lawyers. Ye'll need to try some o' the young farmers; and if, like the lass in the song, 'your face is your fortune,' ye're but a short renter, and will need no to overstand your market."

"I am surprised to hear you, Jemima. Let the young folks alone, to divert themselves, without thought of marrying or giving in marriage."

"Oh, are ye for off? Weel a weel! Joan

and me will have a two-handed crack after ye are gone," Jemima went on, without heeding her.

Out into the beautiful July night, after such an evening of pricking with the pins of poor Miss Clavers' discourse, was a blessed change. The northern summer night, in all its beauty of sight, and scent, and sound, fragrant with the odours of briar, and sweet-peas and roses, of clover, and thyme, larch, and fir woods, glowing with its lovely sky of pale green, and gold, and crimson, and purple, the last gleams of sunlight chasing the shadows on the hill-sides, the red and purple tinge catching the tree-tops, and contrasting with the gold and green of the shrubs and grass below. Tune-ful with the lowing of cattle, the distant bark of shepherds' dogs, the cooing of the wood-pigeons, the eight-o'clock bell from the old church tower, softened (after they left the town behind) by the distance, and their own young voices, as they talked gaily and hopefully of times past and future,—was it not a joy to exchange these for poor Jemima's crabbed views, and strictures on men and women?

At the turn of the road, they met John and Annie Cathcart.

"I am away to-morrow," he said, "so I have been to Heathergate to see my father and mother, and there I found Annie. Walk back a piece with us. Violet, what is this story I hear about a fine picture Colville is making of you, and Sir Hector and the captain going in to criticise it?"

Poor Violet hated the very name of her picture by this time: and, to the surprise of every one, burst into tears. Her sisters, little accustomed to such a scene, suggested that she was tired,—out of sorts with hearing so suddenly of John's departure. They begged her to sit down on the bank while they turned a short way. They would come back to her: or, if she liked, one of them would stay by her.

Oh, no: if they would only leave her, she would walk home quietly: it was not far now.

But Menie looked on her wan, tear-bedewed face, and proposed that Tom should remain and walk with her, feeling at the

time, in her secret soul, that it was a unanimous proposal, and that she had seen very little of Tom for some time.

This was settled ; and then John and Violet kissed each other and took leave, in case he could not get out to see them next day ; for there was a coach from Brighton to the south in the morning, and if he could by any means catch that by leaving early, it would suit him far better than the afternoon coach through St. Mary's.

Great was the astonishment of the elder sisters on reaching their home, to find that their father had been suddenly summoned to the Laigh Cottage, and that their mother had walked up there with him to see if she could send anything to Tibbie, who had been seized with what was believed to be mortal sickness.

Violet, recruited from her fatigue, was playing for Tom's amusement. "Did you see John, to the Saughie Burn? and where is Effie? Stay, Tom, and I will play you this. It is Rousseau's Dream, with variations. Is Effie crying about Jock, Menie?"

"She is taking off her bonnet. She is sorry Jock is going, even though she wished it: he seems in great spirits about it. I doubt whether Annie thanked us for our company, so we did not go far. I think, Violet, we will persuade my mother to go in with you to the Colvilles' to-morrow; and then, if John does not get away by the early coach, she can see him away to the south."

"I don't think I shall go in at all to-morrow, or ever sit for the picture again," Violet said; and the tears came into her eyes. "I just hate all this talk and notoriety."

"Very right, Violet," said Tom; "*I never* approved of it. I was surprised Mr. Colville should ask, and your father grant, such a thing. You're not my idea of a saint at all, Violet. Menie is far more like, with her straight brows, and her quiet, composed look. Miss Silver just rushed at it, for amusement, in the same way she bothers Hugh to go up and help her with her Latin. It's dreadfully dull, no doubt, for a young lady down here, who has spent so much of her time in Lon-

don. But see, now, if I am not right, when the 12th comes, and the house is full, if she heeds these maggots. What she will do when her strict father comes to live at home, I'm sure I cannot tell."

"Marry, probably," suggested Menie, "and live in England. But, Tom, are we not 'dipping our mouths in other folk's kail' as much as poor Miss Clavers does?"

"She is an intolerable hag!"

"Hush, hush! My mother says there was not a prettier nor more clever young woman in the county till her father's death. Their straitened circumstances and the desertion of her mercenary lover soured her; and then the constant struggle her mother and she had further embittered her."

"That is some excuse, Menie; or, rather, it is a reason, but no excuse. There was some beginning laid before, I doubt. I cannot believe that twenty lost lovers would sour some people I could name, or any amount of struggle wear out some folk's charity."

"No promising for any one, Tom; we are

all good till we are tried. But you see the trial is for a damsel to lose the one lover she believes in. Twenty would be no trial in comparison, because it is impossible she could expect them to be all true: if it were——” she did not finish the sentence, for she saw he was not listening, but occupied in catching the rose leaves which Violet was dropping into his hand one by one.

Mr. and Mrs. Stormont returned with serious faces.

“She is very near death,” the mother said, while her husband turned into his book-closet. “She was sensible when your father went in, and said she but to see the laird, and had sent to him. We waited a good while, but he did not come. She rambled much, and I went out of the room; but came back when your father was preparing to repeat the prayers in the Visitation of the Sick, which he knows by rote. He told me he asked her if she would like to see Mr. Dempster from St. Mary’s, or the Seceder minister; but she said, No, and bade him pray. Then she fell into a kind of stupor.

The man they sent when she was seized, overtook our John at the Townhead, and brought him out. He said she may pass in this way, or she may come round again. I bade him come down here, as it is so late and far to go into St. Mary's, and take Hugh's bed for an hour or two, if he must go away so early in the morning. Where is Effie?"

Effie was quickly summoned, and rejoiced in the prospect of having John for a time again.

"See that the water be boiling for toddy to your father and Jock, and you too, Tom."

She spoke slowly and deliberately; mindful as usual of hospitality, but with evident pre-occupation of mind and distress. The scene at the cottage was before her thoughts.

John, too, was far quieter than usual when he came in an hour afterwards, and announced that old Tibbié was gone.

"It is a strange business," he said. "Tib never seemed to care much about her grandson, and yet this sudden departure of his has without doubt hastened her death. She came out of the stupor for a few minutes

just after Mr. Ogilvy came into the room, and was standing by her bedside; indeed, he was preparing to leave it, satisfied that she could not revive, when she opened her eyes and said, clearly enough: 'It's as true as I am lying here, that am so soon to be streekit, there were three folk that kenned it forbye my bairn. I feared to tell you—she deed, yer son deed; and now her bairn is gone. There was one——' then her voice failed—*servant* seemed to be the word, but we could not hear it very distinctly, the stupor came on again, and she never regained consciousness. Her words were, I think, spoken in delirium; but I had to attend to Mr. Ogilvy, who would, I thought, have a fit. He escaped this time; but that old gentleman will certainly go off without warning one of these days, unless he curbs his temper and eschews his drink. He repulsed my offer of assistance, but I continued to keep him in sight until Simmers met him at the foot of the Easter Park."

Mr. and Mrs. Stormont retired to rest, leaving the young people to sit up with John,

who said it was not worth his while lying down, he must be in St. Mary's by six o'clock; and Tom remained to walk in with him.

It was a dreary vigil, with its long spaces of silence, alternating with ineffectual attempts at cheerfulness; and in the early morning, John bade adieu to his family, amid sorrow that had few outward tokens, and his father's solemnly-given blessing.

He was silent for some time; and then said,—

“Annie will be at her window to see me pass: she's a kind, good soul. And, Tom, I forgot to give them a message for Hugh. Between ourselves, I am not sorry his grim mightiness found business elsewhere; but tell Menie to remember me to him, and say I hope to see him in Newcastle. I look for you too, old comrade, before you put the seas between us, to see what a new leaf I shall have turned in my career. I say, I must have a dram; last night's business and this morning's parting have made me feel queerish. The auld body's deadthraw has unnerved me; and that is very unlike me in general, for I have seen,” etc., etc., through

11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

CHAPTER VI.

AUNT BARBARA:

VIOLET unwillingly yielded to her parents' wishes, and went with her mother into St. Mary's at an early hour, but only to find to their disappointment that John had left. Mr. Colville's habits were too luxurious to admit of his being ready at their early hour, but by ten o'clock the sitting commenced, and was over at twelve. Mrs. Stormont sat very patiently, but with marks of being ill at ease on her face, and when the prohibition to conversation was withdrawn, she expressed with energy her feelings about the picture.

"It is certainly very fine," she said; "a hantle finer than our Violet. That majestic woman who is looking upwards like an inspired prophetess is not like the bairn with her gay licht smile."

"Look a little longer, Mrs. Stormont."

And a second study won a shyly expressed

opinion, that the face might "be like Violet when something ailed her."

"And now before the critics come, I have something to show you, which was the reason of my taking the liberty of asking you to come so early, Miss Violet. I promised you a sketch for your father and mother, and here are two for you to choose from."

So saying Mr. Colville produced two sketches, one of Little Red Riding Hood, but the wolf now bore no resemblance to Sir Hector; gaunt and lean, it was the real wolf of the early part of the fairy story, before it revealed its evil nature to the girl. The face of Red Riding Hood was Violet's when uninfluenced by emotions of any kind. The features beautiful, but in repose, and without expression, such a face as any little girl might wear when taking butter and cakes to her grandmother. The other was Violet as a golden haired Hope, her hand on a lyre, with radiant eyes and flowing tresses, her mouth half open, and a look of eager, joyful expectation over all.

"It is too much—you cannot mean it! It is the bairn herself, as I have seen her face many and many a time! And are we really to have anything so valuable, Mr. Colville? You know we cannot give you what you are accustomed to receive for your pictures."

"A free gift, my dear madam. It is to be the Hope, I see. I give it with hearty good will, only I must for several reasons keep it until I leave these parts, and you will oblige me by not naming it to Miss Silver at present."

"I am so glad you are to get it, mamma; although I cannot believe it is like me. And oh! so very much obliged to you, Mr. Colville. I am glad I came now; and may I put on my bonnet?"

"Are you so anxious to get away? That is not grateful; but I see your friends coming down street, so we have only just had time for our mystery. You may put on your hat if you like, and sit with Mary while they criticise. It would not be pleasant to have your nose, and eyes, and mouth discussed, with their merits and demerits."

"Thank you, Mr. Colville," said her mother; "the young lady and her gentlemen can easily want us; so, Violet, I will just say good-bye to Miss Colville, and with many thanks to you, sir, for your kindness, take our leave. We have a long walk before us."

As they left the house they met Miss Silver and the two gentlemen, and after some astonishment, mingled with some real and more feigned displeasure, were allowed to depart, with the promise that Violet should give her friend an evening before long.

"I intend leaving the town early, for I only came in to see the progress of the picture. Hector is off for Denslade again, and hopes to secure Mr. Colville so soon as his visits in this quarter are paid."

She looked out of spirits, and her languid air filled Violet with compassion.

"Oh, mamma, how ill she is looking! I hope she was not really very angry with me for having got the sitting over before she came in."

"She is yellow as saffron, Violet; and I



think must have the bile; that is always depressing. I wish you would name camomile flowers to her; they are excellent for bile."

"Oh, mamma, how can you! She looks to me as if some secret woe pressed her down. I wish I could bear it for her; I wish she deemed me worthy to share it!"

A quick steady step behind them, and Captain Silver came up beside Mrs. Stormont, begging that he might be allowed to drive them at least part of the way to Heathergate.

"Hector and Maria are with old Colville, and heaven knows when they will cease their discussion. Certainly I shall be back in time to drive Maria, or," as he marked her look of refusal, "James can drive you if you will not accept my services."

"We are only walking as far as the Townhead (where I have an errand) before we get a rest, and after having that we can easily walk on. It is what we do constantly; many thanks for your polite attention," was Mrs. Stormont's stiff answer.

"Then I have a better proposition to

make, and one you cannot reject. Maria and I will pick you up at the Townhead if you will tell us where. It is quite in our way; and indeed the day is hot for walking, especially after hours in Colville's studio."

Mrs. Stormont could no longer hold out, and when she reached the Townhead owned to Violet that the drive was indeed more of a boon to her than it used to be.

"I must go in to speak to Tibbie's friends, but you stay out my dear, and watch for the carriage, that we may not keep them waiting."

So Violet waited outside, and kept her eye upon the road where she expected the carriage to appear, but a light touch on her shoulder, and a gay laugh, announced the Silvers, who had walked up by another road, and evidently enjoyed her surprise, and unconscious look of pretty pleasure.

"Now Hector is gone we must see more of you, Violet; it looks an age since we held any of our private and confidential chats."

"I must go now, at all events, and tell

mamma you are here. She said you must on no account be kept waiting."

"The carriage has not come up yet. James had to see to its springs, and transact some other business for the laird, so that you need not disturb Mrs. Stormont yet. Let us walk on yonder, where the trees look so tempting. This is a horrid hole, and I want to talk over our hope of getting you with us on a delightful expedition we are projecting to the Maiden's Cove, down near Herrinraw. Why must you remain in this most uninteresting spot?"

"Mamma has gone into one of those houses, to see some friends of old Tibbie, the henwife at the Laigh Cottage. She is dead, and the laird asked papa to find out what they wish to have done about the funeral. They are, or at least Tib's husband was, a favourite, and Mr. Ogilvy is to be at all the expense; but he wishes to know whether the Kirk minister or the Relief is to be at it, or whether my father is to bury her."

"Dreadful!" said Maria; "and you would have been in that squalid place, listening to

such dismal discussions! Be grateful to us for rescuing you from such a fate."

"She fled, Miss Violet," rejoined her brother, "from the face of her enemy, Jemima Clavers, and left her baggage behind her in the shape of sundry parcels, which it is to be hoped James may have surrendered to him by the finders."

"No wonder! My uncle, bound and fettered with that absurd Scottish idea of kin, insisted only this morning that Aunt Eleanor should invite Miss Clavers out, for her three days' annual visit, and she weakly surrendered her right (a thing by the way, I shall insist on in my marriage settlements) to select all the female visitors to Heathergate, and told me if I saw Jemima I might invite her to take a seat out this very day. I told her she was influenced by a secret desire to hear all the gossip of St. Mary's, and she laughed and said, 'No, but when the laird has once named that visit, it has to be, and better a finger off, than aye wagging.'"

"I think I shall find it necessary to spend those three days at Roselands."

"Nothing of the kind, Harry. If she has a favourite it is you, and I count on your influence with the powers that be, to arrange our excursion to the Cove at that time, before you tiresome creatures have taken gun in hand. Aunt Eleanor will be very glad to have the amusement, and they can sit and talk the scandal Jemima calls entertaining news, while we woo the genius of that lovely spot in more congenial society, and quite apart from her acid discourse."

"I am expecting a summons from my father almost every day. He should be in England very soon," said her brother.

"He is expected at Kilry to-morrow; and by the way, Violet, your brother is there, too. Our father is one of John Chisholm's guardians, and they are meeting to settle his future plans."

"When did you hear this?" asked her brother.

"Hector had a letter express from his friend, Mr. Murray, in which it was named. I thought he had perhaps told you. I dare say my father will not come north until the

affairs of his ward are all arranged ; but if he does, I suppose he will not interfere with so innocent a pleasure as a drive to the Maiden Cove, although I well remember how the denial of every pleasure in my youth was fortified by the assurance from the severe nurse and melancholy governess, that it was what the major would not approve."

"There I am more fortunate than you, for my tutor was a kind and wise man, who never shifted his responsibility on my father's shoulders, and when we met in India, I felt he was a man to be both loved and revered. Pity it was that my regiment marched away so soon from Cawnpore, but my taste of his society has left me most anxious to meet him again. What *do you* think of your friend, Miss Violet, with her unnatural views concerning her parents?"

"Not parents, Harry. I adore the memory of my mother, only too soon lost to me. I believe the worship of the Madonna was made for souls hungry for mother's love—don't stare so, child ! and don't talk nonsense, Hal.

"There is Mrs. Stormont walking this way,

and at the very moment, enter James and the carriage, and, oh! there has been no *contre-temps*, and Jemima knows nothing as yet of her pending invitation."

She hurried off before her brother and Violet, and explained after her own fashion to Mrs. Stormont the reason why Violet had not summoned her. Mrs. Stormont's face looked both grieved and displeased, and she said in a low quick tone before the two others were within hearing, but after they had seated themselves in the carriage,—

"You know the world better than many folk older than yourself, my dear. I cannot have my lassie exposed to folks' ill remarks, or led into the misery of leading a life which Providence has not appointed for her. See you not the wisdom of my daughters' being contented with their own sphere of life? O bairn of a godly mother, do not mislead my Violet!"

"Dear Mrs. Stormont, Violet must be seen, and she cannot fall into a common, humdrum lot. I would not mislead or injure her for worlds; but can you refuse my mother's child

the pleasure of your child's friendship?" And she fell upon and kissed her in a way that scandalised poor Mrs. Stormont, as much as her words confused her senses.

"Her father will be at home soon," she thought, "and then she will live with him, and have plenty of friends and companions; and my bairn is very young, and will soon see other folk besides the captain; and if he really is in love with her—well! many as broken a ship has come to land."

Coquet as she was, Violet cared more already for Harry Silver than for all her other admirers put together; and when he found time during their short walk after his sister, to reproach her for always evading him, the tone and manner, even more than the words dwelt in her memory, and she hoped and feared alternately in the ensuing days that he really loved her—"What then?" asked an inner voice, whose whisper she found it pleasantest to ignore.

Well has the Spanish poet, Erçilla, warned us not to say we are happy until life is ended, nor to be sure of escape from shipwreck even

at the haven's mouth ! Mrs. Stormont rejoiced when a fit of gout taken by the laird after Tibbie's funeral, delayed the expedition to the Maiden's Cove, and an invitation from Mrs. Fordyce to Menie and one of her sisters gave an opportunity for sending Violet away from her too engaging companions, without any positive edict which might have given offence at the House. The days had come and gone while Mr. Ogilvy kept his chamber, and Maria, Harry, and Violet met here, and there, her family seeing nothing of it ; and with the coming and going of the days, Tom Fordyce drifted into a state of mind scarcely less painful than pleasant. Violet's beauty and graceful ways had made so strong an impression upon him, that it was now with difficulty he could keep up the fiction of loving her as his future sister-in-law, and it was in one of his struggles with conscience, that he became the bearer of his mother's invitation to Menie and one of her sisters.

Fate seemed against him even in his half-hearted resolution not to influence Mrs. Stormont's choice, for the opportunity was so

desirable a one for giving Violet's mind a different bias, that the voice of authority at once decided that Violet should go with Menie.

Barbara Stormont had shared in the general feeling of disappointment and displeasure caused by her brother's departure from Presbyterianism to the Church; but since, strong sisterly affection and [after her fortunes were joined to those of Mr. Fordyce,] a considerable knowledge of the world had softened the force of early impressions; and when her husband, an officer of commissariat, contented with very moderate savings, settled down on a pretty farm close to the German Ocean, within a mile and half of St. Vigean's, she gladly renewed intercourse with her only brother and his family. Mutual domestic cares kept the sisters-in-law apart, as did, no doubt, also their strong church differences, scarcely concealed. The brother and sister met more frequently, as his duties called him to assist his brethren in her neighbourhood, and having soon become a widow after settling down at the Syde, in which she was life-rented, she had taken much of his advice about her son Tom.

A kinsman of her husband's in the neighbouring northern county promised him an Indian appointment ; and by Mr. Stormont's advice, his mother sent him from home into the well known office of Hasty & Faed in the town of St. Mary's.

Hope deferred had tried the young man sorely, and his age was rapidly advancing to the limits prescribed by the laws of the Company, even in those days, when things we are told were not so strictly looked into as they were afterwards, when Joseph Hume's hand rapped so officiously at the doors of privilege and abuse.

His mother stipulated for his presence every Sabbath with her at her kirk. She was an active, clever farmer, giving an audience at a very early hour each morning to the griever who managed her land ; but overlooking during the day with her own eyes his doings and those of his subordinates ; a kind but exacting mistress, with a hand and a head ruling all her household affairs ; having stores of fine linen in her napery press, and preserves in her cupboard ; not a little of a doctress among

the poor—their generous helper and faithful counsellor at all times. A mother doating on her son without outward demonstration of her love; willing to endure or toil for his advantage, but most unwilling to countenance any weakness or dereliction from his duty. A Scottish matron of her stamp who, on a threatened invasion, at once sent off the horse and accoutrements of her volunteer son, saying, she would not have him a horse's head behind any man in his duty of defending his country. Such strong minded women are apt to have sons of a less determined spirit, but never unloving ones. She was an accomplished and cultivated woman for her rank and day, had seen a good deal of the world, and expanded under the knowledge. When it is told that she was not a tall woman, but well made, and dressed in widow's weeds, that her bright dark eyes danced with intelligence and energy, and had a way of impressing people with an idea that nothing escaped them, while they became wondrously soft where they met sickness, sorrow, or penitent sin, there is little more to be said about the almost unknown

■ -

aunt, who received Mr. Stormont and his daughters at her garden gate. She had heard Tom's notice of his engagement to Menie, without displeasure, and had sanctioned it as a contract to be one day fulfilled, without many suggestions of worldly wisdom.

"They but to wait," comprised all she had to say on that head, and she would have scorned the lover who had spoken of any motive save mutual love. The girls had left home at a very early hour, charged by their mother, respectively,—

"Violet, see that you finish those gravats of your father's; and, Menie, I would wish you to try and discover how your aunt flavoured yon cordial she sent at Yule. Mind, my lasses, and conduct yourselves like your father's bairns. They will ask you to the kirk, but if ye can, without being ill-mannered, walk in by to the chapel at St. Vigean's. Stand up at the grace; the Presbyterians have an ill way of sitting down. Take care of your best dress, Violet, and only wear it at high times; and, bairn, listen to your aunt when she is speaking until she has done. You are very

apt to interrupt, which is exceeding ill-bred. Remind your father to bring the scoured silk from the dyer's. Bless you, and send you safe home again!"

A cordial meeting between the brother and sister, was followed by an inspection of the nieces.

"Come in, come in! I was beginning to think it long since Tom went to the coach. This is Menie. You're very welcome my lassie. How you are grown since I saw you at Heathergate last. And this will be—Effie? No; Violet. You're welcome; come in, and get off your things, and take breakfast; and then, James, I would like you to look at what Sandie is doing about the town. Tom has gotten a holiday, and will show you all round it. Now, bairns, you have off those hideous bonnets, I can see what like you are. Menie favours our side, James; but I know not where Violet got her hair and eyes. Sit in by and say away! The fish is just out of the sea. And the kitchen lass baked the scones after Tom went away," etc., etc.

Great was the disappointment to find Mr. Stormont must return the same day or "Marjorie would be uneasy;" and for the first morning it is a point of etiquette that hostess and guests shall be idle. Tom's return from escorting his uncle to the coach was a welcome sight to all, and after the early dinner they went out for a walk round the farm, called in Scotland "the town," and round the fine old garden and orchard. Leaving Menie to his mother, Tom led Violet to all his favourite haunts.

"I hope we are to make you happy here. I was so glad to see it was you, at the coach to-day."

"For shame! You ought not even to have seen whether it was Effie or me, when Menie was by. I think Effie would have liked to come, but mamma just said it was to be me."

"And were you not glad to come to us?"

"Not very. It is nothing against you to say it, Tom, because I might have seen as much of you at Heathergate. But I am afraid of your mother. I have always the

bairn's feeling [recollecting what preparations were made when she was coming]: 'The doo'cote was harried for fear o' ye; the parlour was sweepit for fear o' ye;' and I wished much to go to that pleasure jaunt with the Heathergate people, when the laird is well. However here I am, true Thomas; and you will need to make much of me for leaving such temptations."

"Small thanks to you by your own confession, but I am thankful we have you at all events; and," said the obtuse Tom, "since you are so anxious to see the Maiden's Cove, you shall see it; it is only about four miles from this, and if you think it is too far to walk, we can get a boat from Herrinraw, and sail there."

"I am very glad to tell you, Tom," his mother said that night, "that I like your choice very much. She has a great deal of the refinement of our side of the house, and her mother's shrewd sense, and doubtless management. Violet is a very lovely creature, but I am glad it is Menie who is to be your wife; and I doubt whether in the long run, her

good looks will not outlive her sister's. There is more intellect and more countenance."

And while the days came and went, Mrs. Fordyce's bright eyes noted much that gave her no pleasure,—Tom's attention to Violet, and Menie's increasing quietness and thoughtfulness. She was more than half disposed to be angry with her son.

"I am so afraid of Violet getting tired of our quiet life," he said. "She cannot speak about books and authors like Menie and you; and Menie knows quite well what I mean by it."

"Oh very well, Tom; you may be right; but I know I would not have liked it in my young days, when your father came courting me; and don't make too sure that Menie likes it. I should be sorry son of mine ever made his true love's heart ache."

But she said no word to the other offending party, Violet; feeling that such proceeding would compromise Menie's dignity.

"I doubt she is that thing I hear them speak about—a flirt; for she must know that Tom should not leave Menie to walk up by herself to the house, while he stays with

her to the last minute fishing in the burn, and both rush in to their dinner after the blessing is asked."

At length to Violet's delight there came a note to her.

"The day for our excursion is really fixed. Jemima is coming in the afternoon, and is to drive with my uncle and aunt, while Harry and I are to ride. Glad are we to find, my dear friend, that your present place of abode is come-at-able, and Harry very well remembers being at the Syde when a small boy. Mr. Ogilvy says that if you can be at the end of the Harestane Close by twelve o'clock, they will pick you up, and bring you to the Maiden Cove, our place of rendezvous. I would gladly do better for you, but one or two of the officers insist on our joining them, and it is too far for the 'fat old swine,' as the coachman calls the carriage horses, to be driven. Do let me know that there is no impracticable barrier to separate my loved friend from

"Her attached and expectant MARIA."

"I think, my dear," said her aunt, "you have quite an excuse, Violet, in our gig being at the smith's."

"Was ever such impudence! To ask you to walk three miles the other side of St. Vigean's!" said Tom.

"If I wanted an excuse," was Violet's half crying reply.

"Now, Violet," argued Menie; "I do not think father and mother would like it, and you see there is no time to get their opinion: it seems so ready-like to start off that distance."

Violet was disposed to combat this view of the case, but Mrs. Fordyce at once settled it by saying,—


"Violet is my guest, and I can permit no such thing as that she should go to the Hare-stane Close. And then how is she to get home again at night? Such nonsense! when the Cove is barely three miles and a half by the cliffs. Menie and Tom and you can walk there some day, Violet, and you may invite any of the young people of St. Vigean's you like, and make a play of it."

"I do not like it, Menie," she said, when poor Violet left the room to conceal her tears. "Miss Silver is very thoughtless, and believes it as easy for others to get carriages and horses as she finds it. I for one should consider the proceeding a very undignified one. It is not to be."

And the matter was settled. Menie went off to console Violet, but could not find her in their room. She ran through the garden, and what was her astonishment to find Violet and Tom seated on a turf wall, its northern boundary. Their backs were towards her, and Violet was pouting.

"Well, perhaps you are right: but I did wish to go so much; and then what can I say to Maria?"

"Poor Maria!" laughed Tom. "After all I do not think she will feel more than I should if you had gone away from us all day, or so much, depend upon it. Her escort will console her. But I will tell you what, Violet, if you really wish so much to go, I can walk with you to the Maiden's Cove, and Menie and I will walk again there and bring you



back. I could walk twice as far without fatigue."

"Oh! that would be delightful, you kind cousin, if your mother will consent to it."

"Trust me to get her consent. And now dry those beautiful eyes, and look bright again. Ah, Violet! if I could save them from all tears how gladly would I do it!"

Menie felt she had heard enough, and turned quietly away; nor did she ever reveal her knowledge of this plan even when it was broached in Mrs. Fordyce's presence, and very reluctantly consented to. She insisted on hearing Violet's letter, and it was written and rewritten before her aunt's idea of propriety and dignity was satisfied.

"Let it be seen that you take the walk with your own people for the pleasure of seeing the coast scenery, and are glad that in doing so you can oblige your friend with an interview."

How little did good Mrs. Stormont reckon on this result of her manœuvring—wrecked even in the haven's mouth!

"It is a very undesirable intimacy," Mrs.

Fordyce said to Menie. "Harry Silver is not a very steady man, and his sister is more than suspected of being involved with the Papists: at least rumour says she has been tampered with by a Miss Murray, an Irish nun, and her brother. He is a priest, and was concerned in Sir Hector McPherson's apostacy, and there are those who say he aims at Miss Silver's. I knew her father and mother well long ago, and anything more distressing to them I cannot conceive. Mrs. Silver, good pious soul, has long been gone to her rest; and the general (he was Major Silver then) gave himself up to his profession, and left those two children under the care of a governess and governor, but also under a kind of supervision of his own relatives. He was thrown in India into the company of Henry Martin and other earnest Christians, and did much good there. He thought no doubt, honest man, that when he changed the worldly tutors of his children for those who professed like opinions to his own, he did all that was requisite. I dare say they were what they professed to be, but Miss

Silver's governess certainly failed to gain her confidence ; and 'her father's sisters, who were gay worldly women living at Bath, made her look on herself as a persecuted damsel, and the morose, hard governess left her so soon as she could assert her independence. How it will be, when George, that is General Silver, returns to live in this country I know not. I dare say you thought me hard upon Violet, and that I interfered unwarrantably, but your father intimated to me that he would just as soon the friendship fell to the ground, and I obeyed his wishes so far as I could. Tom was very senseless to persist and persist, as he did."

Slowly, gradually, while her aunt was speaking, a light dawned on Menie's mind, and she cried in anxious tones—

"Oh, Aunt Fordyce, is my Hugh mixed up in these conversions?"


"Forbid it, Menie! I never heard that, nor would I have spoken of the others had I not wished to justify myself to you. What could Hugh Stormont have to do with it?"

"I do not know. I hope it is a silly

notion; but papa met Mr. Murray at Heathergate, and I heard he was with Sir Hector and John Chisholm. But, aunty, I am sure there is no fear of Violet turning Papist, and the 12th is very near now, when Tom, like an oracle, predicts the downfall of Miss Silver's intimacy. So keep your mind easy; this pleasure party over, there will, in all probability, be a stop to any more intercourse for a long time. My father and mother are always unwilling to annoy the laird and Mrs. Ogilvy, who are to be of the party, so that I think on the whole it is better Violet is going."

"I doubt that is their weakness. What said you was the reason this party did not take place before? I wish she had gone from her own home, and have a most unpleasant feeling that any mischief occurring is my wyte."

"The laird took gout after Tibby Gowk's funeral. He would not listen to Mrs. Ogilvy's wishes in the matter, saying, she was the widow of one of his most respected servants."



“What a sad business that was! It happened during the only visit my husband and me ever paid together to your father and mother. The poor young lass acted under the influence of delirium; indeed the mother got blame for not watching her; and the country folks, aye ready to make a marvel, said she was privately married to Mr. Ludovick; he was only a lieutenant then, but came to be a captain the next year, and was shot in mistake by one of his own midshipmen at the taking of Guadaloupe. He married out abroad after that, and sent home his wife. She died of small-pox, and her infant——oh, it was a sad, sad story, and it was long before your father got over all the horror and annoyance it brought to the Ogilvies. He was so much with them. The laird lived away for many years, and then married Eleanor McPherson, and brought her to Heathergate. They were Highland folk originally, but were living at Bath—Mr. McPherson and his sisters. He had been out in the West Indies, made a large fortune, and had influence to be made a baronet. George Silver married Emily, and the sisters

had not a point in common. Kirstin Gowk I remember well, too; indeed I saw her after that business, when she was with a revenue officer's wife at St. Vigean's. She and I fell out at last about the pertinacity with which she threeped Nanse was a married woman—oh, just a pack of buff and pride, for the lass was very upsettin'. Ludovick is a very fine lad. Notwithstanding my prejudices, I will own I thought few like him for principle and kindness, but I think he is well away from St. Mary's and this country altogether."

CHAPTER VII.

THE MAIDEN'S COVE.

"FINDING, dearest Violet, that you are so much nearer than we supposed, Harry and I propose driving in the pony chaise, instead of riding, as we intended, and will call for you at the Syde, where Harry perfectly remembers going with our father when he was a troublesome wretch of a boy. Until now he never connected your cousin with those old friends. We hope to persuade your sister and Mrs. Fordyce to accompany us, or at least to follow after, and to take you safely home in the 'twilight grey,' lest Dickman's ghost run away with you."

So that was settled. They came in the pony chaise, and Menie greatly admired the stately yet hospitable manner in which her aunt received them, and the ease with which she entertained them.

"Let me just look, dear Mrs. Fordyce, for a cupboard in this corner; you gave me

strawberries out of it. I was a very small shaver when I was in this house before."

"I think you were; not more than four years old. Violet, are you ready, my dear? I am glad to have seen you, Miss Silver, and you, my old acquaintance. I knew your father well in my early days, and none could have appreciated your excellent mother more. A godly and a gracious woman! May you resemble her in character, as you do in person!"

"What a delightful person, Violet, is your aunt; and how pleasant to hear my mother so spoken of!"

"Ah, Harry! had she been spared to us! But away with melancholy. Here is our mounted guard, you see," as two officers from the barracks rode up. "Hooly and fairly, Angus! we cannot be ridden down in that wild cateran fashion."

Some hours later Tom and Menie started on their walk, and reached the Cove at the sunset of a fine autumn day. Despite her troubled thoughts, and the resolve that was shaping itself in her mind, Menie felt and enjoyed the grandeur of that walk—along

rugged cliffs, with only a broken wall between them and the deep green sea—out upon the bare rock, where even that barrier was wanting, and it seemed as if a hasty or stumbling step would carry them down into the fathomless ocean. Then all path ceased on the very verge, and they turned inwards over a rugged field. Many a tale and legend of smuggling and *diablerie* was told of that bold coast. Far out and away stretched the ocean, ruffled with catspaws, or slumbering in oily reaches—only one solitary rock miles away, the seagulls, and a distant sail or two breaking its wide expanse. In the opposite direction the sun was sinking behind the hills, its parting glories tinging the clouds in the west and north, and before their red and purple left the heavens, the cousins arrived at the Maiden's Cove. Here an easy path led down a bank to a beach of fine sea-sand, guarded at either end by a huge rock, framing in the arch of grey blue sea and sky, a very scene of fairyland, and Menie would scarcely have wondered, she thought, had she seen those creatures of

the imagination skimming along in airy dance. They were not there, nor at first sight it seemed was any human being; but on looking down from the path, at the base of a huge detached rock, and sitting on some fragments of the same, quite in the sea as it were, they saw Miss Silver and Violet.

"Softly, Menie, down this path, and we shall surprise them before they see us." But Tom reckoned falsely, and the path ended in a tall rock inaccessible to any climber, while it had brought them directly over the heads of the two girls, whose voices came distinctly to them, borne on the breeze from the sea. They were turning to find another and more practicable path, when there was a silvery laugh, and Violet's voice was heard saying,—

"Tom Fordyce? Oh dear, Maria, what makes you think me so wicked? Indeed, you do me injustice! I would not delude the dear good soul from his allegiance if I wished for his regard, which, believe me, I do not. That rough diamond will take much more polishing and setting than I could

pretend to give it. You know me better than to think he would be my choice, though he is most kind to me, and I think my sister will be very happy with him even in the rough."

Tom blushed red under the darkening sky ; his punishment had found him.

"You need not be so energetic, Miss Violet," he said, in low, angry tones.

Menie felt vexed, ashamed, grieved ; scarcely so sorry for him in his evident annoyance and discomfiture, as she might have been ; annoyed by her sister's flippancy, and by the degree of intimacy her address to Miss Silver showed ; but all these feelings had hardly struggled into existence when a piercing shriek, several shrieks, rent the air, and Tom burst down a path he had discovered, and rushed to the water ; not in time to anticipate Captain Silver, who was already carrying Violet to the bank, all dripping with wet. The piece of rock on which she was sitting gave way, and threw her backwards into the water, happily at this part not very deep.

As Menie looked at the water streaming from hair and clothes, and saw her pallid face, the angry thoughts she had lately felt rose up in her mind, and some invisible agency seemed to suggest the words when they had laid her down in the cottage :—

“Sister, sister, lend me your glove,
Binorie, oh ! Binorie !
And ye shall be sweet William’s love,
By the bonny milldams o’ Binorie.”

It was horrible, and she hastened to give all needful assistance to her frightened and wet but scarcely insensible sister. While thus engaged, and when Violet was just recovering, Miss Clavers walked into the cottage.

“Here’s a business ! Really, Menie, a good skelpin’ would be the best restorative—promote circulation in her back if she were my bairn ! The rock gave way indeed. What made her sit on a rock then, senseless tawpy ? No skirlin’ or laughin’, Miss Violet ; and come out of your nervish dwany this minute. If you stand there makin’ a

phrase, Menie Stormont, she'll lie there till the morrow's morn. I would be ashamed, and twa men folk walking outside! Here, woman, hand me the whisky and the kettle. Drink that, Violet, when I bid you, and put on this honest woman's clothes. Not one word, but do as you're desired. There, you see how much better she looks now; and your auntie is crying for you, Maria, so you'll gang up to her, and assure her it was not you was dookit, and I'll drive home with your brother. It's as much as my life's worth, but I'll not mind at a pinch like this. And the offisher lads were on their horses caperin' here and there, so you can all drive back to the Heathergate thegether. Your auntie will need a dreadful dosin' the morn."

No one fully appreciated the self-denial of poor Jemima in this case, for she hated an open conveyance, and had only been lured to the expedition by the certainty of not being exposed to the evening air. Her treatment of Violet seemed, however, to have been successful, for she very soon came round, and insisted on walking home.

"It's best for you, my dear," said Jemima ;
"and so we had better be going, Maria."

Menie joined in requesting them to go ;
and, after some well-bred hesitation, they
left.

"What have you been doing, Maria ? ' I
am so cold, and feel as if I had one of my
quinseys coming on. I shall never come out
again with young people—never ! And your
uncle will be in such a state."

Mr. Ogilvy had started with them in the
morning, but found important business to de-
tain him in St. Mary's. When they reached
Heathergate, he met them with his usual
hospitality, but with an air of perplexity,
which was explained by his saying, as soon
as his wife and he were alone,—

"Eleanor, my dear, have you got the key
of my table in the study ? Did I hear you
say something about taking it out one day
when it was left in the drawer ?"

"I did say something ; let me see—no, it
was not that key. I said you left one in the
gardevin, and here it is."

"That is not what I want. I am sure

you said you took it out. Think! I am anxious to find it."

"Well; now you speak of it, I recollect putting a key into—well, was it my work-bag? Contie, bring up my work-bag. No. Well then, behind the scent-jar. I gave it back to you, laird; I remember perfectly, because just at the moment Bell came in to say that a new jack was wanted."

"I do not think you did; but the key is missing from the corner cupboard, where I always keep it; and unless I left it by mistake in the drawer, I cannot tell where it is."

And he went away to institute an inquiry and search, ending with an order for the smith to come up in the morning, by nine o'clock precisely, to pick the lock.

"And, Eleanor, here is a letter from George Silver, to say he will be at Heathergate on the 9th, that is the day after to-morrow."

"How startling! Why could he not have given us longer notice? My drops, Contie. And give me my red Canton crape and black lace ruffles—not that yellow turban of course;—the gipsy cap with the red rose;


and send Miss Silver to me as soon as she is dressed.

“Maria, your father is coming the day after to-morrow. Dear soul! How sensitive! You are red and white alternately. Do smell my salts, or take some of my drops. I must speak quickly, because your uncle will be in such a way if we do not go down at once, and I want to tell you something. It is commonly reported in St. Mary’s that Harry is paying attention to Violet Stormont; so, my dear, I think for a time we will not invite her here.”

“Common report means Jemima Clavers’ ill-natured tattle. I knew she would say something unpleasant.”

“Well, my dear, I said, ‘such nonsense!’ And then she began to warn me against popery in such a very odd way.”

“Never mind her, my dear aunt. I have not put on my sash and ornaments; and as you say the laird will not be pleased if we are late, so excuse me imbibing any more of Jemima’s essence of vinegar. I must finish my toilet.”



By the same hour Tom and his cousin had arrived at the Syde; where, to their great astonishment, they found Hugh Stormont. He was looking better and more cheerful than when he left Heathergate, as Menie remarked, after Violet's odd costume and its cause had been commented on. Mrs. For-dyce insisted on her retiring at once to bed, and drinking a hot decoction, of great virtue; and in the morning the healthy country maid was almost well, only a little languor remaining made a long walk inexpedient; so Hugh and Menie set out to the fisherman's cottage to return the clothes, and give them an acknowledgment.

"And if it's not speerin' owre muckle, fa' are ye? And fat ca' they thae leddies that were here yestreen? Aye, and yere name's Stormont, and the dookit lassy's tae. My man's cuzen was aince servant i' your hoose—Kirstin Gowk they ca'ed her. My man was up bye at the burial the week afore last; auld Mrs. Gowk's; and vera respekfu', he said, everything was; and the laird himsel' laid her heed i' the grave. There was ane

speerin' about the family a while syne. David Duncan, at the other side St. Vigean's. Ye'll no ken him, but he was a man-o'-war's man in his young days, and kent the captain, auld Heathergate's son, weel.

"Weel, good-day; and we'se aye be fond to see you gin you're coming our wye."

"Menie," said Hugh, after a silence, "I want to tell you how I felt your kindness when I was last at home, in not pressing to know the cause of the change which must have been both perceptible and painful to you. You shall now hear at least the outline of my late history; and after it is told, let it never be discussed between us again. Whatever mistakes I have made, it is now a sealed passage, and may not be amended. Before coming to Heathergate, my connection with Chisholm threw me much with all his friends; and their partial kindness made me forget, perhaps too much, the unequal position in which I stood towards them. Both at Kilry and Denslade and elsewhere I was courted and caressed, and very foolishly suffered myself to be flattered into the

belief that Maria Silver felt a return for my warm and enthusiastic admiration. Hopes were held out to me that I should have a diplomatic appointment, through the influence of Sir Hector's friends, abroad, which would give me an income and position befitting hers. You recollect our meeting at the burn: it was then pending. I had almost succumbed to the temptation, which involved a change of religious profession, when I discovered, by accident, that I had been made a mere tool of; and that by working on my credulity and throwing me off my guard, the real object of the intrigue, the gaining over my pupil in my absence, had been accomplished but for his good principle and honour. Murray threw off his disguise in our last interview, after a letter from John Chisholm had reached me; and I hastened to him to remain until his guardian, General Silver, should arrive. The poor lad had been sorely tried, but had stood the test better than his unworthy tutor. General Silver declined to receive my resignation of my office; but I insisted on it, though I consented to remain as his guest for some time.

We had much conversation; and I think I never expected to revere any man so much as I do that excellent man. Now you have all the story which relates to me. More I cannot tell you : what concerns others I have no business to mention."

"One word only, Hugh. Do you still love Miss Silver?"

"No, Menie; it was a foolish fancy, and I believe, is gone for ever. This business has for ever ended my intention of taking orders here. I have been offered, and, if my father consents, will accept, an appointment in North America; and it may be that I shall receive ordination from a bishop there."

"Oh, Hugh! and my mother fondly hoped you might one day succeed my father; and that meantime you would certainly be near them."

"I am afraid they will have other sorrows. I spent a day at Heathergate before coming to take you girls home; and I find from Effie that John has been writing much in his old strain, asking for money; and that some friends of the Cathcarts', near Newcastle, do

not report favourably of his improvement. If Violet is well to-morrow, I really think we must go home, although my aunt is most kind, and Tom the best of good fellows. Ah, Menie! how widely we shall be scattered from the parent-nest! Any day he may go, and then who knows how soon you may follow?"

"Hugh," she said, in a low quick voice, "do not ask me why; but before Tom goes to India, I shall give him his promise to me back again."

"Menie!"

"Yes, Hugh; but say nothing about it till it is done. That may happen any day. I am only waiting for an opening."

"It is not a morbid jealous feeling, Menie, nor a useless self-sacrifice?"

He stooped to hear her reply; but the "No" was almost inaudible, and the expression of anguish gave a clearer answer.

"Tom can bind himself however," he said; "and, Menie, though you are my own sister, I am mistaken if he will not seek you with his matured love, more than in his

boyish fancy, if even he takes his promise to you again."

"I have brought myself to believe—I know indeed,—that I release a debtor who one day might wish to repudiate his debt. Tom will never come back to me again."

"Well, I wonder how long you two people have been! It is twelve o'clock, and I seeking you ever since I came back from St. Mary's. Give me joy! Here is a letter from that respectable individual, Peter Fordyce of Fordyce, and I am going out to the house of Thresher, Flayle & Co., at Calcutta,—rig out, passage, all paid, and a handsome salary. Better than an appointment in the service, that."

"I congratulate you!" Hugh said, and wrung his hand, and went into the house.

"Come here, Menie, into the garden. I want to speak to you. It is an old-fashioned practice I have always admired, and here is a gold coin I have kept for a year, intending to break it between us. I have broken it, and Menie, my love—my own sweetheart,—there is your half."

Alas! the opening had come!

"My dear Tom, I am so glad—I am so sorry," and she burst into tears, but did not take the broken bit of gold.

"Cheer up, my bonny lass! I never dared hope for such luck as this. I shall be ready for you in no time. But what?—oh, Menie, you are not thinking of last night, and those silly girls' chatter, are you?"

A long uncertain "No," and his look changed to one of vexation.

"Tom can you believe that the light of my day will be darkened when you leave this? Can you believe that I have in no manner changed since we plighted our faith to one another? and yet I cannot take that piece of gold, and by so doing send you away bound to me."

"I believe you are a jealous cat, and want to break with me."

He looked into her face in high wrath; but something he read there changed his tone.

"Forgive me, Menie. I know I have no right to speak to you so; but do believe me, and forgive me."

"I have nothing to forgive, and I have not changed."

"Well then take the gold, and let us be bound to each other for our lives—and after."

She was almost changing her mind, or rather being over persuaded against her judgment, when Violet came up from a side walk.

"Here you are! I really think considering how ill I have been, you might be more attentive to me. What is the matter?"

But Menie was quite unable to bear any more, and rushed off to the house.

"What is it Tom?"

"I am going to India, Violet, immediately."

"Dear me; but Menie knew it must come to that, and I am sure you have always been the coolest of lovers."

"Still waters run deep," they say, "and, it's the shallowest burns, that make the most noise."

"Cross thing! People only take to proverbs and metaphors when they are stupid and unpleasant; so good-bye for the present."

"Is this right, bairn?" said her mother.

"I doubt it. It seems so harsh and unkind, at the last moment—and the lad going away, where he will be among strangers. You are not one to change your mind, so I cannot think it is lightness or frivolity; but is it not some mistake? some idea to which human nature is prone of making yourself a sacrifice? Ah! my dear, when you are as old as I am, you will know that life is full of sorrow, without our making it for ourselves."

The girl threw herself into her arms, and wept, and clung to her.

"Oh, do not break my heart altogether. Tom came to the Heathergate, and only Effie and I were there, and he asked me. Then Violet came, and that opened my eyes to see that when he goes out into the world, there will be lasses fairer far than me, and as clever, and as fond of him. For you see I am looking at it soberly, and giving myself all the value I can; and it would be a dreadful thought to me, that he had found one better suited to him, and felt bound by his promise to me. If his heart keeps true, and he likes me better than them all, I will take

his piece of gold willingly, and go to him over the seas, and be his faithful wife. And if he sees any one he likes better,—well, then there shall be no burden of a broken promise on his spirit when he weds her.”

“Let be, Marjorie!” said the father. “Let the bairn do what she thinks right. The man’s love is stronger than the youth’s fancy, and our Menie is worthy of the best.”

One more attempt Tom made, when he went to take leave of them at Heathergate; but she met it softly and firmly.


“When you come back, we will speak of it.” But she broke down when she came to say farewell, and the remembrance he carried away with him was, that she loved him with all her heart. Her wan and worn face, while she went about her daily duties, told her suffering. Who shall tell the misery of her nights, save the like weary watchers? Often has the sufferer wondered at the amount of seemingly useless misery, when time has healed the wounds; but who shall tell how the severity of that suffering, helped to work the soul’s eternal health?

"Be good to Menie, mother," wrote Tom from the Downs; "and let Menie be good to you; she has promised it. I think more of her than I ever did. I have put up the pieces of gold, with our names on them, and the date of the day I offered it to her. She shall take it yet from me if we are spared, and if I die they shall be buried with me."

CHAPTER VIII.

MASTER AND MAN.

WE have dropped Ellen Smith for some time, but must now return to her doings, and weave them into the web of our narrative. She made several visits to Tibbie, and heard her more than once declare her daughter Nanse's marriage with Ludovick Ogilvy to have been a fact, although she never alleged any other reason for the assertion than her girl's own word ; so that Ellen treated it as mere talk and delirium. After Ludovick Gowk's departure, she seemed to become quite childish, and then it was she often repeated the story to Ellen's secret disgust ; yet did the reiterated assertion leave on her mind a kind of haze or film, not wholly to be dispersed by her habit of resolute unbelief. With all her faults, Ellen had a warm heart, and bore an attachment to the old henwife. This leagued with her



inquisitive disposition (a disposition partly natural, partly the result of feeling how resolutely she was excluded from all family councils and affairs) to interest her in her uncle's history, and to strengthen her determination to see if it was his picture which was in the frame, with its face to the wall, which she had caught sight of once in her grandfather's closet.

At another time she would have keenly resented and bitterly remarked upon the cool manner in which it was decided by Mrs. Ogilvy that she was not to go with the expedition to the Maiden's Cove, but remain behind to exercise a nominal surveillance over the maids, to cover over the preserves, and superintend the dusting and arranging of the stores of china, in press and drawing-room, and in Madam's own bedroom.

"See that no one but Contie goes into your grandpapa's closet, but *you* may dust the books in his study, taking great care to put them in their places again. I want Contie, who generally does it, to prepare some of my dresses before the visitors arrive.

She has the key of your grandpapa's closet, and will open the window in it."

The prohibition only whetted Ellen's desire to look into the closet, and no idea of honour restrained her from resolving to gratify the desire if possible. She therefore set herself to watch the preliminary dusting of the china, waiting for a favourable opportunity of circumventing the slave of the key. Miss Contie, who, as she dusted the brittle ware, ejaculated "Troublesome stuff! my 'art is in my mouth each time as I dusts them vases, and fervently I wishes them dragons back again in their native helement. Law! Miss Ellen! if I 'aven't been and chipped the 'andle of that 'ere caudle cup. I must fetch some of that gum, and whisky to fasten it again; and it is to be 'oped nobody will touch it, till it is 'ardened in that corner. And however I am to get my mistress's gown done before dinner-time, with all them ruffles, is more than I can conceive—not to speak of a desire as I had to get some muslin, Morrison was to send me by the carrier's cart, which has never come, and the 12th so

near, *and* the shooters, and me only old uninteresting caps, and them valleys as they bring with them, the only chance we poor females has of entering that blessed strait."

"Well, Contie, I don't mind helping you. If you dare leave me to do grandpapa's rooms and Madam's china, I can do them quite well."

"Only one thing, Miss Ellen. Master is so very particular about his book closet next the study, and I should have warnink that moment I was found to have let any one meddle with anything that is in it. I am only to sweep the floor and open the window; but if you will be so very obliging, miss, as to dust the china in the store-room, and my mistress's bedroom, and other hitems of books and such like, I should have time to do the dress, and run to the carriers, and trim your new bonnet afore Madam sees it, which that millinder in St. Mary's have sent home very old fashioned, and top-heavy for a little body like you."

They went together into the study, and while Ellen took down and dusted, as she had

been told, the few volumes which gave to the room the distinguished title of the study, Contie produced a key from her pocket, and opened the door of the large light closet so often mentioned. "Lawk;" she cried out, "I never saw that afore!"

"What is it," asked Ellen, and as she said it, she passed in with her.

"Why if there isn't a door with a key in it! Well, I never! That screen must have concealed it. Now Miss Ellen, begging you respectfully, I have told you that Mr. and Mrs. Ogilvy objects partikler to any one meddling here."

"Now don't be cross, Contie, who's going to meddle? Not I. I just want to look out of the window to see which side of the house it is on; I never could properly understand the situation of it. I see—just where I thought, into the plantation, and there are the cows. But what is that the brown cow has in her mouth? You did not leave any lace there, did you? It looks like a cap or a collar."

"Lace! oh! my mistress's best cap," and she forgot everything to rush down to the

rescue, while Ellen went to the second door, turned the key so as to unlock it, and went out into the study to finish the books, where Contie found her.

“Those tiresome hanimals! I wonder why they must permitted so near a gentleman’s residence; but it was Bell’s cap, Miss Ellen, not the mistress’s. I left her scolding of that cow as if it were a Christian. And now, if you’ll hexcuse me, I’ll just put the key in my pocket, and trip down to the village. Nancy she has gone down to the gardener’s, and I shall be back in half an hour, and shall leave the china in the bedroom to you, if you will be so kind.”

“Miss Ellen has got her fair weather gownd on to-day,” she remarked to the cook. “I’m sure when the mistress said as she was to stay in and help dust the chiny, I thought what a day we should have of it, and the capting and t’other young person from the parson’s going. You never knows, Isabella, how ’tis to be! Nay now, you’re never sulky because that ’orned hanimal chewed up your cap: it were not a becoming one.”

"Tut, it served my purpose vera weel, and was mair like a serven-lass than some folks' cockernonnies sticking fu' o' gum floors. But what's that about Miss Ellen? Keeps an she be fey!"

"Fay! what's that? You are such queer people, with your ghosts and such like."

"I did na say fairy. I said fey; that's what folk grows afore they dee; it's a thing weel kent. I had an aunty, atweel, an awfu' cratur she was; aye dinging us here and there, but yae nicht when we cam in weet and fyled, and was maist frichtened to lift the latch, the auld lass bade us in to the fire, and bedded us wi' a sugar piece; and the niest day she took a fit and lay a week, and syne deed."

"What an 'orrid tale, Isabella; but I don't think Miss Ellen will die of over-goodness yet awhile. They do use her shameful however, to my thinking, at times, and I shall trim her bonnet over again before my lady sees it, or she will say it is well enough, and is a fright to be'old."

"Puir lassie! it's ill trav'lin' on other folks' coat-tails. But the langest journey wins till an

en'; and maybe we'll see Miss Ellen sittin' wi' her feet in the cuff o' their necks yet."

But the ingenious mind of Contie was not obliged to exercise itself on this singular, though evidently to Bell satisfactory, metaphor, for she had finished her preparation for her walk when she had brought her own sentence to a conclusion, and her light active step had carried her far beyond earshot.

Meantime, while Bell pursued her household work and Saunders slumbered in his pantry, Ellen hastened into Mrs. Ogilvy's bedroom, having satisfied her mind that the closet-door opened into it, and on a careful investigation decided that an old-fashioned bureau stood against it. How to remove this! but a trial showed there was small difficulty; it was empty, and evidently stood there only to conceal the door, so that she easily moved it away, opened the door, and stood before the picture frame. There were two oval spaces, each containing a miniature not well painted; one of a girl with powdered hair, and a rose in it, with the initials E. O., aged 21, forming a ribbon round it. The other of a young

man in naval uniform, the ribbon round its frame bearing the letters L. O., aged 19,—her mother and uncle.

Now that she had gained the fruits of her schemes, they were but Dead Sea apples ; the miniatures were uninteresting looking, nor did the room contain anything further to gratify her curiosity ; a glove, a faded ribbon, a prayer-book, to “ My honoured husband, from his affectionate spouse, Ellen Douglas Ogilvy,” in one open table drawer. They were poor common-looking things ; and if they had any value, it existed in the memory of him who cherished them. She pulled the door to again, and was about to replace the bureau, when she heard men’s voices on the stairs—her grandfather and another. They were coming to the study ! They halted to look at something ; Her quick mind made her mistress of the position ; in an instant she opened the door, drew out the key, and locked it, and laid the key on the ground, pushed the bureau softly almost against the door, yet leaving space for her to stand and listen to any conversation at the other side ; in two minutes she could

move it entirely into its place and be found at her task of dusting. She had managed to cover the keyhole, but the light closet was only partitioned off with lath and plaster from the bedroom, and the words came plainly to her ears.

"I am sorry to have brought you back from your expedition," the lawyer was saying; "but you seemed so anxious to settle matters the other day, and I am bound for the glen to see a client of mine, who insists on my going myself,—old Silver Knowe, ye'll recollect him."

"Ay, ay; is he making his will? A rich old carle yon, I dare say. I did not care much about the ploy, only my wife insisted I should go. I have seen the Cove many a time; but what I did want was to give you those papers. And when I am away you'll show them to Archie, my brother, and let him do as he likes about following out the clue. I'll have nothing done in my life-time. I could not stand the affront. Archie is prepared to sift the matter as soon as he has it in his power, but I

would never condescend on anything to him; that was the way we saw so little of each other for years. Now never say a word to me on the subject again. There's another thing I must do: the lassie Ellen, she must be minded in the will—one moment, till I get the key out of my cupboard to open the drawer of the study table. Then came an interval, and some strong remarks from the laird. The key was not in its usual place; he must have left it in the drawer by mistake, since no one had access to the closet excepting himself,—not even his wife.

“I like to keep the smith's fingers between Eleanor and my papers; but I have some floating idea that I heard her say something about my leaving a key somewhere,” and he rang the bell violently.

“Saunders, will you ask Contie if she saw a key anywhere about, or if she heard her mistress tell me she had found one.”

“Deed, laird, I can no. Contie's awa' oot on an errant, and I am sure she saw nae key, or she wad hae mentioned it. Ye'll just hae dropped it when ye took out your pocket nepkin.”

"Hold your tongue, and shut the door; we want none of your imaginations."

"Aweel, aweel," said Saunders, and he shut the door as he was told."

"I must get up the smith, and he'll need to bring a new lock and a new key. Take a dram, Hasty. I am sorry to take up your time. Well I know your time is money, man; I have found that before now. I will bring the papers and letters the first time I'm in by to St. Mary's."

"Well just one little glass, for I have a long ride, and then a walk, and the day looks to be changing."

They went down together, and Ellen lost not a moment in pushing the bureau into its place, and running down into the drawing-room, where her grandfather saw her arranging the ornaments, when he looked in for a moment on his return from seeing Mr. Hasty mount his horse.

"You here, bairn! I had forgotten you. Why were you not at the pleasure party?"


"Madam did not want me, I believe, grandpapa, and Maria did want Spicer to go;

she grumbles so about the dulness of living here, and has been threatening to give up her situation. I believe that was the real reason; and also I was needed at home, to help Contie with the china, and set the dessert since Elsie hurt her hand, and is not able to do anything."

"Humph! it's just as well I left them before I found out this arrangement. Spicer indeed! an ignorant, illiterate cockney! Set her up! Why Contie is worth three of her, and she never went with my wife, cockit up like a sickly whittret beside the coachman. I recollect now her being there, but thought she was only going in to St. Mary's for some of Maria's follies and gewgaws. Never mind; you shall get the next time I promise you."

"I don't care about going, especially when Miss Clavers was there; and nobody will miss me."

"Well, well! no need to be so fierce. Bring me my spencer from the pin, and take my great-coat, and pour me out a dram and bring it. I am going to look in at the Laigh Cottage to see what it needs for the incoming tenant."



She watched him depart, then took the coat to hang it up in the lobby, when she felt something strike against her arm; it was in the pocket—the lost key. Saunders was too displeased by his master's recent rebuff to be in the way, and she indulged her prevailing weakness, seized it, and ran upstairs to the table drawer. Only a bundle of letters sealed up, with a tape round them, and labelled—L. O., A. G., L. G. She dared not tamper with the seals, so put them back very reluctantly, and restored the key to the pocket, where it was afterwards found by Saunders, and presented to the laird in silence.

“Where found ye it?”

“Just in your ain cot pocket. Far suld it be? and you lookin' for it every gate but the richt ane! It's the truth you're growin' doitet, and sae conceited you'll no give in to the naitral conseekence of years. Is it the key ye was wantin'?”

“It is indeed, and I mind now I had on the great-coat when I locked up that drawer, and must have slipped it into the pocket instead of putting it into my desk.”

“ To hear you is like the bairn’s rhyme :—

“ ‘ On Tintock Tap there is a mist,
And in the mist there is a kist,
And in the kist there is a cap.’

“ Lockin’ yae drawer wi’ a key, and then lockin’ that in some ither place! Wha’s steerin’ yer bits o’ peppers?”

“ This is unbearable, Saunders. Long as we have been together, we’ll need to part unless you keep a better scrapit tongue in your head.”

“ Tuts! There needs twa words to that, and I’m no gaun to speak ane of them. I’ze no flit, I can tell you, and it’s no like ye, will till ye’re carried. What’s far mair to a purpose, is it the green seal as ye ca’ it, I’m to fesh up the day for the cawptain and the twa offishers? Comin’ in till their denners at five o’clock, sic’ through other wark.”

The adventures of the day furnished much conversation during the evening, and Miss Silver, in the midst of her admirers, gave little thought to Violet’s accident. Saunders listened *à deux oreilles*, and confided to Contie his regret that it was “the bonny lass, and no that glaiket cutty, Spicer.” The sharp Cockney

maid was his special aversion, having been convicted by him more than once of libelling his native land, despising "the family," and turning *him*—Saunders, "into a laughing-stock for James Coachman and the captain's *vally de sham*."

"Contie's an Englisher, but lang residence in oor house has edicated her intill a decent kind o' Scotch woman," he said to himself; "but nae amunt of edication can improve yon ampident sparra."

Ellen kept in the background, with a sharp fear of Jemima's tongue, and indulged herself in speculations concerning the packet of letters. She had quite settled to what they referred, or rather to whom; for her undisciplined imagination wove those initials into many different histories. Ludovick the elder and Agnes *alias* Nansy Gowk were really married,—and what then? Ludovick the younger was heir to Heathergate. Never! No, his initials were there—L. G. Gowk always he would be, a red-haired, red-handed fright! What if the estate might come to the winsome, debonnair captain, with his Brutus head and curling, beautiful brown

hair! She did not care whether it did or not, for would not Violet then be lady of Heathergate? Not she, indeed; Harry Silver knew better than that. And how, if the male line failed, about her mother's daughter succeeding! Well, no; Archie, her greatuncle, had been named by her grandfather and Mr. Hasty, and therefore he must have something to do with it.

"Waken up, Ellen," called Mrs. Ogilvy, "and find us the cards. Only catch the ten, you say, Jemima. Well, the laird likes it also, and I don't mind, so we'll play. I do not think we can play after my brother-in-law comes."

"You are quite sure, Mr. Ogilvy, it is to-morrow he is coming?"

"My dear, he *said* the day after to-morrow, that is to-morrow. You and I will go in to meet the coach from the south on the chance; though he does say he might turn aside for one night to see an old Indian friend at St. Johnston's."

"Deal away, Jemima!"

"May I see papa's letter," said Miss Silver. "I thought he would have written again to me."

"Just settle at your piano or your harp, Maria. I cannot mind where I put the letter; but I am sure I have told you what was in it. And will you give us something we can understand, instead of your dringeing, dull Italian lays?"

Ellen went back to her reveries, in which Harry, being deposed from the first rôle, was to turn out very faithless and unfortunate, etc., etc., etc. Ellen always being the heroine, whether Harry sued penitently, and was by her accepted, or Luddy, constant and true, sought her favour in vain.

Maria, in deference to her uncle, sang old Scottish ballads and songs, and Miss Baillie's then new pastoral, "The gowan glitters on the sward," to a setting of her own, "Logie o' Buchan," and "Wanderin' Willy." Then going to the harp, she struck a chord or two and said,—

"Now for a dismal ditty which has been in my mind to-day. I wonder if you thought of it, Hal!" and she sang "Binorie," of all strange things, and said, "The drowned maiden, the black-browed sister, the hand-

some fickle *fiancé*,—it was to the life with some accessories left out, and that background of sea and shore.”

“How wicked of you! To me it was like the prince, always in time to rescue the distressed damsel, whether fire, or water, or cruel kindred were her unhappy lot.”

“Go on; what are you waiting for?” cried Aunt Eleanor. “And now Luath and Lufra are barking. What can be the matter, Mr. Ogilvy?”

“Nothing unusual, my dear; beggars probably. Go on; Jemima has played.”

“Listen,” said Miss Silver; “here is a hymn I found in a strange way. Angus *you* know what the bole is in a cottage, but Captain Smithson must be told; it is a hole in the wall, close to the fireplace, a search into which has been my delight since ever I came into these parts. Sometimes you come on old broadsides; sometimes on ballads that require only a little modernising to be very fine indeed; but the specimen I am going to give you was found (not by me) in such a receptacle, where the compositions of a clever

young lad who died afterwards of consumption, had been crammed by an ignorant woman with whom he lodged. He was a student at Aberdeen, but left there in consequence of some difference with his masters. I liked the words, and accommodated them to a setting by Handel. A recitative which I shall spare you, introduces the speaker dying on his first battle-field. You shall tell me whether the words and accompaniment go well together.

“Ave ! O Holy One,
From earth I pass away !
The sins and errors I have done,
Oh, call not in array
Against my soul, but let me be
Where peace and love shall dwell with Thee.
Ave Regina !”

“What is that ? What is that, Maria ?”

“Only some lines written by Lucky Stevenson’s lodger ; you need not protest against them ;” and she went on.

“A creature of the dust,
Sweet Lady, hear my cry !
Accept my weak and feeble trust,
And graciously reply.

Give me to dwell in rest with Thee,
That where Thou art my place may be ;
Ave Regina !”

“It’s no a love song,” said Jemima. “I doubt it’s red rank popery,” and the three laid down their cards and fidgeted on their chairs, when just as the voice broke forth again—

“Far in a distant land,”—

the door opened, and a tall man stood behind the singer, holding up his hand as if to deprecate interruption, but at once the players pushed their table aside. Captain Silver started to his feet, Ellen’s dreams came to a speedy ending, and Maria Silver turned to be clasped in her father’s arms—an unintentional surprise and *coup de théâtre*, for the laird was accused of having read the letter amiss, and it was finally found and produced as a witness against him, with its date of three days before.

The officers soon left the house, and then explanations were asked and given.

“I arrived by the late coach at St. Mary’s,

and took a chaise out, scarcely expecting to enter without being heard, the dogs barked so furiously ; but on finding from Saunders that I was not expected until to-morrow, I told him he need not announce me, and entered under cover of Maria's music to feast my eyes with a sight I had so long yearned for." And as he spoke, his eye passed round the circle, resting fondly and long on his son and daughter, who clung to him with perfectly natural endearment.

Mrs. Ogilvy ought to have felt the surprise as too much for her nerves, but the emotion was real. She forgot her drops, and remembered to order supper for the traveller.

"It was a real queer thing, Joan Reid," said Miss Clavers, afterwards to her friend, "and my heart fairly lap' into my throat to see him standin' there, owre lifelike just to be a dooly, and yet wi's hand a bit held up ahint Maria there was something o' the appareetion aboot him. We had nae time to think, or else Eleanor and me at ony rate would not have likit him to find us wi' the deil's buiks in our nieves, and as little wad

Maria hae been skirlin' her popish ballants, but he neither seemed to see the tane nor hear the tither. Ye mind we aye said he had the fine mainers lang syne, when mainers were mair common than they are now. Weel may his bairns be proud o' him. Syne he turned to Eellen Smith, and called her by her name, and said he was glad to mak' her acquaintance. Puir lassie! I daur say she never thought to hear the like. I'm surprised though he's gaen to you at the chaipple. I wad hae thocht a man o' his principles wad hae come doon the Wynd to us. But it's a' ane; he's the richt kind, and sae is Jeems Stormont, I believe."

CHAPTER IX.

CHANGES.

THE excitement produced by General Silver's arrival scarcely abated before the time of retiring to rest, and disturbed the slumbers of most of the party.

The following morning he proposed to ride with his daughter to see some of his old haunts, and some of his old contemporaries.

"We will ride up the hill above St. Mary's for the view, and come home by Mr. Stormont's."

Maria's manner had changed since the evening, and was now marked by a degree of melancholy and reserve, while his kind and constant endeavours to draw her out and overcome her feeling of strangeness only partially succeeded. Her mind was alive to all the charms of his conversation, and yet she seemed to be keeping a strong guard over herself.

On his side he was so willing to believe her everything he could wish, that he would not note a tone of levity and frivolity with which she met his more thoughtful remarks, but in his secret soul held that it was natural enough in a young girl, unwilling to show how much she really felt to so complete a stranger as he then was.

They reined up on some level ground at the top of the hill, and he invited her to dismount, and walk with him to the point from which they could best see the view, while the groom held their horses.

"I think I can find it although so many years have passed since I last looked on it. How often I dreamed of it in India! Here it is!" and they looked on the prospect through a frame made by the boles of two gigantic trees. The castle, with its woods and lawns; the silver river winding among the meadows; the old worn town, nestling under the spires of its ancient kirk, and in the distance, the low blue hills cutting the sky.

"I never saw this before; it is most lovely," said the girl, as she sat down on the

heather bank, and continued to gaze her fill on the beauties before her.

"My Emily brought me here first, and it was afterwards a favourite excursion with us. Do they ever speak of your mother to you?"

"Sometimes; and the country people take pleasure in telling how beautiful she was, and how good; but I have never heard half so much of her as I should like. Aunt Eleanor always goes into comparisons of her hair and eyes, with descriptions of her dress, and how it became her; my uncle for the most part solaces himself with the reflection that I shall never come up to her. Tell me what she was, and how I may resemble her!"

Her fine eyes were full of tears, and notwithstanding her tone of satire when speaking of her uncle and aunt, her father congratulated himself on the right chord being struck, and a subject of mutual interest found.

When he went on to speak of his after-life in India,—its hopes and disappointments in endeavours to benefit others,—she made no response, and finally complained of being so

tired that the visit to the Stormonts was postponed.

When Mr. Stormont and General Silver met, they talked of public affairs and the news of the day; the turn which the war was taking on the Continent; the king's health; the regent's doings; the prime minister's assassination; but no word was spoken concerning Hugh.

Mr. Stormont wondered how much was known to him of the history confided by Hugh to him only yesterday, when he brought his sisters home, and at once departed to meet the friend who offered him an appointment as a professor in a newly organized University in British America. The truth really was that General Silver knew nothing about the part played by his daughter, in leading the young man on to make her a proposal—the temptation and scheme laid to entrap him, and his final emancipation.

His duties as guardian to young Kilry had needed no disclosure of these details, and the general feeling of respect and affection which he inspired made every one anxious to shrink

from naming what they felt must one day prove a bitter trial to him—the obvious influence of Murray and his sister over Maria's mind.

That very morning Spicer had gone off to St. Mary's with a letter for the post, addressed to Miss Murray, in Bath.

Her father proposed a tour in England to his daughter—with a sojourn at Bath—before the month of November, when a house which he had taken in London would be ready for them.

Harry was to remain at Heathergate and its neighbourhood for the shooting, and then join his father and sister; and Maria anticipated gaily the various pleasures before her, and secretly revelled in the idea of meeting her friends, the Murrays, even to the point of regarding with utter indifference the visitors expected at Heathergate.

A week passed swiftly and pleasantly, and the guns were in full exercise, when General Silver and his daughter departed. He had urged Maria to second his invitation to Ellen, but the request was met with more than indifference, and Maria professed herself to be

entirely of Mrs. Ogilvy's opinion, that such a life as they were going to lead would only render Ellen's future more dreary by contrast. They were early days for the exercise of his paternal authority, so he gave in, though with great reluctance ; and on the assurance that he considered the invitation to be only deferred until their plans were more settled.

The necessary preparations for departure, the accession of many visitors to the house, the excitement of hearing so much about the mother whom she cherished as the brightest vision of her early youth, and her father's devotion to her, filled Maria's soul, and superseded her romantic attachment to Violet, so that she scarcely ever went to the Stormonts, or entreated Violet's company ; nor did her brother's love stand the test better than Maria's friendship. In vain Violet treasured up the fond words he had spoken when he carried her into the cottage, and looked for him to follow up that almost declaration by one more explicit, while she prepared herself with a magnanimous refusal on a plea of not injuring his prospects, which of course he would

at once set at naught. Hope's flattering tale was told in vain. Harry, in the excitement of the rescue, had said more, not than he at the moment felt, but than his after-reflections considered wise. He thought of his debts; of how he was to tell his father about them; how foolish at that time it would be to confess his love, and his wish to have a portionless girl for his wife. He had moved among those who called such a proceeding rank folly: how was he to know that General Silver held other views, and aimed only at securing his children's happiness?

"Fordyce is out of the field now, and there is no particular hurry; but I must not stay where I run the risk of seeing her. The little witch fascinates me so that I shall say more than I wish."

He would go farther north to shoot; he would join a friend in a yacht round the Western Isles; he would hunt with his Gloucestershire friends; he would try and forget her; and in the spring, he was to go back again to his regiment. So the days went and came; and, under the fair seeming of

Heathergate society lay a network of mine and counter mine which might explode any day, and shatter the smooth surface to atoms.

The Stormonts bore their share in the general "pretencing" of ordinary life. Menie went about her work, and read her books; but there was no life in her labour, and only a bitter weariness in her book-learning; love had opened profounder pages, and the study had to be made with heart-sorrow and some mistakes. She was a brave scholar notwithstanding, and one day or other would reap the pleasant fruits. It was sowing time now, and the skies were heavy and lowering, and the furrows were stiff with rain. Hugh came for a day or two to say farewell, and present the savings of his ample salary for his mother's future benefit, should she need them. He was to have all his expenses paid. Tom was on the ocean too, and it must be many a day before they could hear from him. Truly, that summer had brought cumber to Menie's loving heart! She spent no needless self-pity however, but worked for everybody, and was

her mother's right hand, her father's loving counsellor. Alas! he needed her sorely, for tidings of John reached them from time to time at variance with his own accounts. He wrote to Effie after Tom sailed, and took credit to himself for having foreseen and forewarned his cousin of the end of his engagement.

"With all due deference to Hugh, his conduct in going out to America is simply idiotic, and he deserves to be taken on his passage by some one of the enemy's men-of-war." While his own doings were spoken of as "most satisfactory." "The old boy thought all the world of him, and had even broached the idea of partnership." But the gossiping world of St. Mary's heard and retailed other and less pleasing accounts, some of which finally reached his father's ears. In this case alone he could not seek his faithful aid and consoler—his Marjorie—for he desired to shield her tender heart from the evil tidings; but to Menie he had recourse: she soothed his grief and allayed his fears with assurances that the folk in St. Mary's were very fond of

any ill story, less from a diabolical love of mischief than from a craving for excitement and novelty. And that if it were partially true, John once a partner, and on his own responsibility, would take a better turn. Nor did she fail, with tenderest filial duty and modest diffidence, to suggest higher topics of consolation in the result of his unfailing prayers and faith in the Power which alone could turn John from the evil of his ways.

"Say what men like, Menie, it is a terrible vice ; and I would give worlds if I had them, that John knew when to refrain. I dread his violent temper, when inflamed by drink, may lead to some horrid catastrophe."

By mutual consent, they spared Effie the bad rumours they heard ; and she rested well content with John's account of himself, the rather that her mind was at this time pretty well occupied by an unexpected offer from Patie Merry, just appointed to the chapel in St. Vigean's.

"Oh, Effie ! but will ye take him, and he so little and insignificant ?" asked Violet.

"Good gear is aye made up in little bulk,"

was Effie's answer; "and I never heard that height is a mark of excellence. I am sure there was Saul the head and shoulders above the others, and David's brothers all taller and more buirdly men than him. My father and mother are well pleased; and," she concluded with quaint candour, "he is the first man that ever asked me; and I may sit till I am hair-mouldy before I get another."

So Mr. Stormont married them; and they went to live in homely style among his congregation, as her father and mother had done. But as the autumn waned into winter, Violet's drooping health became an anxiety to all the household: it was the wasting sickness of hope deferred. Her lover never came now, and his absence taught the girl how far her heart had gone in this flirtation. For a time they thought it bodily sickness; had the doctor from St. Mary's, and sent her to the Syde, that she might have advice in St. Vigean's; but in vain. She came home worse than ever; and as the weather became colder, stayed chiefly indoors, and laid on her bed half the days. Then she confessed

to her mother, and only then, how strong his words had been, and the hopes to which they had given rise. Marjorie hid them in her heart; and, strong as she was, wept sad tears for the wreck of her darling's happiness. Christmas came, and with it a letter from Hugh, detailing his passage, with its storms and calms, its fears of American cruisers, and safe termination. He liked the country and his work, had received ordination, and was working with a vigour which showed him heart-whole again. There was unmistakable pleasure in the letter, which brought pleasure to the loving hearts which read it. It broke, with its vigorous details of a new life, on the monotony of the present time at Heathergate, "if only Violet were improving."

A horse's feet approached the house, amid the falling sleet and snow and the howling wind. The girl's face flushed with faint colour. It was the stable-boy from Heathergate House.

"The minister at hame? I was bidden, sir, to tell you to munt this powny and ride

as fast as ye can up by. There's an awfu' stramash, and naebody to help. Miss Eellen fund the auld laird in a fit, and Madam's skirlin' that we can hear her out bye. Jeems is awa' for the doctor. I hae a lantern, and I'll walk afore ye."

"Sic a night for you to turn out in, minister!" said his loving helpmeet, as she brought him his blue cloak, with its collar of curly grey wool, and his cap, with ears to tie under his chin.

Menie at once went off for her wraps, and prepared to walk with the lad.

"Never fear," she said; "with your joseph, and a shawl over my old bonnet, I shall take no harm. If they do not want me, I can come home again."

The lad held the lantern, which he lighted, aloft for their guidance; and the rough road, with its bit of bog, the avenue, dark with unpruned trees, were passed in safety, though the falling snow and the dark heavens above made them a little perilous.

The house was in disorder. They found the lad's account substantially correct. Ellen

had found her grandfather in his study in a fit, had called up Bell and Saunders, and by the advice of the latter, sent off for the doctor and the minister. His wife had broken from the kind but bewildered Contie, and reached the study, where a sight of her husband brought on the most terrible hysterics. Mr. Stormont prescribed the usual remedies, and left her to Contie and his daughter, while he conducted the doctor, as soon as he arrived, to the study, where Ellen and the two servants were watching the laird. A bed was laid on the floor, and the doctor forbade his being removed at present.

"He will not die," he said, after having used the severe remedies of that day; "at least, I think not; but he will never be himself again. Virtually, Ludovick Ogilvy has ceased to be laird of Heathergate. It will be well to let his brother and the general know; and when I can leave him, and ride into St. Mary's, I will give Hasty a call to say what has occurred. If you and Saunders will bide with him, Miss Ellen had better lie down.

"Do not contradict me, my dear. This is

not to be a business of days or weeks; and you will need to husband your strength. Je-mima Clavers was with us when the coachman summoned me, and drove out in my gig. She is skilful about sick people, and far fitter to cope with this case of hysteria than you or Miss Stormont. Give me a glass of whisky, my bairn, if you can, and go to your bed."

Notwithstanding the doctor's sedative to Mrs. Ogilvy, the house rang all through the night with bursts of laughter and horrid shrieks; and when 'poor Ellen, notwithstanding the doctor's words, sought Mrs. Ogilvy's room, and found that the sight of her only seemed to excite fresh accesses of the disorder, she gave in, and entreated Menie to go with her.

"I dare not be alone; I am sure I cannot sleep. O Menie, Menie Stormont, this is an awful night! He was so kind to me at times—often; and I *was* looking in at his study where he had told me never to come unless he sent for me, when his eyes turned to me, and he fell in that awful way."

"Ellen, my dear! there, put your head on my shoulder. Do you not see how well it was you were there? He might else have lain for hours; and now no time was lost by your quick wit and sense."

With these, and soothings such as one would use to a child, Menie succeeded in partially calming her; and the tender care and sympathy of that night made Ellen her friend for life.

"Did you send away to get forward the express to the Silvers and Mr. Ogilvy in Edinburgh?"

"I believe your father did. But, Menie, we heard only yesterday that Maria Silver is not with her father. Those Murrays got round her, and made her a Catholic. I don't quite understand about it, but she is away and married to Hector McPherson. She was playing with it when she was here; and Madam says she always misdoubted Mr. Murray when he visited Heathergate. She cried dreadfully yesterday when the letter came from the general; but I do not think that had anything to do with my uncle's seiz-

ure ;” and she shuddered. “To tell you the truth, Menie, we have been staying away from your house for some time, because Jemima told the clash of the town about your Violet and Harry Silver to Mrs. Ogilvy, and she was afraid the laird might hear it too, and connect Violet’s illness with it, and be very angry. He is so fond of your father, and never cared for either Maria or Harry. *I* could have told Violet what a flirt he is, even taking up with me when there was no one else. I was very near believing his fine phrases, when Violet came on the scene. And, oh ! but I hated her till my anger was changed to pity for her.”

“Spare your pity for other things. Violet is weak and not very well, but when the spring comes she will be quite herself again.”

“Pride, pride, Menie Stormont ! You know she is ill with the love sickness, and I am sure it is a pity, for he is not worth it ! Oh, listen again ! Is not that horrible ? Will she never cease shrieking that way ?”

Silence came at length, and the girls fell asleep, to be wakened in the morning with the

information that Mr. Stormont and the doctor had sat up all night, and wanted breakfast, that Mrs. Ogilvy was quite worn out, and dozing, and Miss Stormont must come to her father so soon as she was dressed.

"Tell me truly, Mr. Stormont," said Miss Ellen, "how is my grandfather?"

He took her kindly by the hand as she came into the dining-room with this question, and assured her her grandfather was no worse, and would, in the doctor's opinion, come round to a certain point, but would never be himself again.

"I shall stay here with your permission, my dear, until General Silver comes, or Mr. Archibald, as you require a man's assistance." He added a wish that she should accompany his daughter home for the day, but she resented the idea as an affront.

"If I may not see him, I cannot leave grandpapa's house while he is in this state."

It was a sad, dismal time. Without were "wind and weet, and snow and sleet;" within was human weakness in a double form. The strong man of imperious will bowed down be-

fore the inevitable decree; selfish, womanish sorrow, shrinking from the sight of suffering, or rather from the break-up of her pleasant life.

Contie murmured and was helpful, Jemima alternately scolded and moralised, but both had their place, and filled it; while poor Ellen went to and fro in the deserted sitting-rooms and on the staircase, with a heartsick, terrible feeling, that all joy had faded out of her life, and these scenes were to be her portion for ever.

Mr. Stormont went out to pay his necessary visits to the sick and dying, and returned to sit by his friend, who knew not, nor cared to know, who was there—to speak words of comfort to Mrs. Ogilvy—to try to direct Ellen's awakened mind aright,—until the third day brought General Silver, Mr. Archibald Ogilvy being laid up with gout.

By that time his sister-in-law had realized and accepted the doctor's sentence with partial submission. By degrees and with many returns of her disorder she bore to see her husband, and said it was a comfort Saunders understood him

so well, and that Ellen could stand his not recognising her—he never had been fond of her; but to her—his wife—whom he had so loved, it was anguish not to be endured; and so it came to pass that Saunders and Ellen watched over him, wheeled him out, and walked beside him when he came to that point, and bore with patience, not natural to either, the burden of his death in life for weeks, months, nay, more than two years.

To return to time present. By that sick bed Mr. Stormont and George Silver no longer talked of politics or the news of the day, but of the higher themes of life and death, so familiar to both; and then the general opened his heart with its sorrows to his friend. He had heard of his daughter's intimacy with the Murrays, and that the priest had been the instrument of Hector McPherson's perversion, but had resolved to ignore all rumours on his arrival at Heathergate, and show to his daughter only the fond affection he felt for her.

She appeared to return it—did really return it, and her dead mother's memory was a

powerful talisman in his hand, until Miss Murray, a strong minded, clever woman, determined not to lose her convert if she could help it, weakened his influence by means of her constant correspondence. The accidental discovery of this drew forth an indignant remonstrance from the father, and Maria, confiding her woes to her friend, was led to look on him as a naturally amiable man turned by his Protestant faith into a persecutor, and on herself as a martyr. She fled from his house to her friend, and being received into the Romish Church was united (with a special dispensation) to Sir Hector. Her large fortune derived from her godmother was entirely at her own disposal, and, "as I believe, the bait used to ensnare Hector. I know now my daughter's hand and her love might have gone elsewhere, to one who happily saw the plot in time, and escaped it. Your son, Mr. Stormont, for I speak of him, would have made her happy I believe. I cannot hope as much from Hector's ungovernable temper, of which I have heard from herself. I could not go to her wedding, but I have assured her my house

shall at all times be open to her. At present Hector will not permit her to come near me. From what I have seen of Maria, she has not deeply considered the change she has made, but has been led into it by deeper and stronger minds. It may be that she may change again, and I wish her to feel that she has a father's love, should other love fail her. Miss Murray's influence has brought it all about. She has constantly assured my poor girl that she never knew peace or rest of mind until she joined the Church of Rome, and I well believe her. I recollect her years ago, when a mind of remarkable power combined with great indolence made her one of the most miserable beings. Now she is obliged to work, and for a time at least the full occupation found for her in work congenial to her subtle, intriguing spirit, has appeased the craving of a mind not to be filled by light, frivolous, amusements. I judge not what the end may be, but I hope the time will come when work may be found for women gifted at once with talents and leisure in our Protestant Churches, without the superstition and dreariness of a cloister."

At this point his hearer's sympathy failed, and he listened as to some of the wonderful visionary views he had heard the general held, his own experience of the female mind failing to suggest other supplement to its appointed duties of household work and plain seam than an occasional visit to a neighbour, the study of Venn's "Whole Duty of Man," Kettlewell's Devotion, Law's "Serious Call," and the old ballads and songs of the country, with (for very superior intellects) a course of the "British Classics." No superior training, no inauguration of duties such as he had heard the French nuns practised, would have made either of his Marjories, he thought, wiser or better women ; and he could not echo the wish that different times should come. It savoured to him of Jacobinism, and the reign of the goddess of liberty. But he held his peace, for Silver was in trouble, and no doubt was unhinged by it. His indulgence to his brother in trial increased when he was made the depositary of his repentance, for having been to blame in leaving his children so much to themselves. "They made me the keeper of their vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I

not kept," he said. "The words sound for ever upbraidingly in my ears ; I gave way to my selfish sorrow for my darling Emily, left my children to the care of others, and this is the result."

Jemima Clavers went and came from St. Mary's to Heathergate, and did the work of a wiser and better woman ; for Mrs. Ogilvy in time gave in to what Contie called "her thoroughfaring predominant ways," and began by degrees to interest herself again in the gossip and affairs beyond Heathergate. Moreover Jemima had made up her mind to take advantage of "an opening" (she had called it to her internal consciousness) for the remedy of a wrong perpetrated under her eyes without becoming protest. She rushed into the breach when the unconscious general remarked one day in the drawing-room, while the poor old laird was having his long daily nap,—

"What is the matter with that beautiful girl of Stormont's ? I was horrified to see the change in her to-day, and her father evidently shunned the subject. Is she threatened with decline ? She was lying on the sofa when I

went in, and over her head that lovely picture of Hope, poor thing! she was less like Hope than Despair."

"Ye've said it then," was Jemima's severe reply; "humph!"

"It is decline then. Oh, what a sorrow for poor Stormont to lose so sweet a creature."

"It's my belief he *will* lose her, then, and ne'er a ane to wyte but himsel' and his wife, that ye wad hae upholden for a sensible woman. (Puir weak veshels are we at best!) Eedolatry, ye ken. They made a graven eemage o' the lassie in a figure; letting her skilt here and there, and Penty Colville takin' her for some papish saunt or eedol! And when she suld hae been at hame knitting her faither's hose, or mendin' her ain, I fund her silly mither at them to let her down to the Maiden Cove, as gin she were an heiress! Oh, Eleanor, ye need not glunch and screw your mouth at me. The haill toon saw it forbye me. Wherever she was, there was the captain; and, George Silver, I maun tell the truth, as though it were this nicht I was to be streekit. It was no the lassy's faut, although

I did say it to her aince to see and rouse her pride,—what hae we puir lasses but our self-respeck, as we ca' our pride? Up and doon, wherever ye catched sicht o' her bonny face, there was his heed bent doon over it like a bulrush. She's a spoilt mawkin, but how was she to ken that the cratur' Cupid's darts, shot and reisted or 'winter among the showers,' in 'summer among the flowers' were a' to be spent? The lassy had seen little and learned less."

"Are you speaking of my son, Miss Clavers?" asked the poor general slowly.


"I've spoken," curtly responded the oracle.

"And had better have held your peace," responded Mrs. Ogilvy sharply. "Such frivolous nonsense! And Harry so very superior. Oh, Jemima, how could you utter such folly?"

"I've spoken," said Jemima again, "a word to the wise;" and she nodded her provoking head to the general.

She was a meddler and a gossip, but for once she had done well.

General Silver wrote to his son asking him for his confidence, and received in return for the loving, manly, fatherly letter, long confessions




of extravagance and debt, but none of fickleness or change. He loved Violet, had loved her, must love her, should ever love her through all the moods and tenses of a lover's vows, but he dreaded to tell his father (having to confess to so much debt) of his wish to take her out to India as his wife. He feared Mr. Stormont's righteous wrath; and, deeply conscious how much his love grew by what it fed on in her company, fled from the scene of his summer's happiness, carrying with him in his misery the punishment of former folly and extravagance, the knowledge of which and of his father's kind liberality to him made it impossible, he thought, to mention his taking a portionless wife. His training had been among those who reasoned in that manner, and he was scarcely to blame for holding their opinions.

CHAPTER X.

THE RESULT OF MISS CLAVERS' MEDDLING.

So thought the candid and loving father, yet did he not permit him to escape without a plain, nay, severe, setting forth of his selfish conduct in winning a love which he could so weigh in the balances and pronounce wanting. He did not reveal to him what he had been told of Violet's sickness having been caused by his inconstancy ; but mentioned what he had heard of the circumstances of the past summer : of his devoted attention to Mr. Stormont's youngest daughter, and the result to which it must have led in the engagement of her affections, and drew out from him in return a full confession of his attachment, and of the delight with which he would make it known to Violet, now that it had, as he believed, his father's sanction. After this, it was not long before a letter reached Violet containing a full declaration of his love. It



was answered, not by her, but by her father; and his letter ran thus :—

“DEAR SIR,—My daughter, Violet, had the honour of yours of the 20th inst., but is, I regret to say, too ill to reply to it, or even to read it. The day before it arrived a weakness under which she has laboured for some time past, assumed a severer form of suffering, and her life is now, alas! considered in danger. Her complaint is fever, induced, as our doctor considers, by immersion in the sea near the Cove. Under these circumstances you will see how vain is any allusion to the subject of your letter. I considered myself justified in perusing it, and now beg to return it to you. If my child is raised up to us again, it will be a more fitting time (always supposing you have your father's sanction) to speak to her on the subject, if in the meantime I can ascertain that such communication is for my child's happiness. At present I feel a long time must elapse before we can venture to think of anything with regard to her but the issues of life and

death with their awful surroundings.

“ I have the honour to remain, sir,

“ Your obedient humble servant,

“ JAMES STORMONT.”

Harry lost no time in coming down to St. Mary's, and met his father at Heathergate. The laird's precarious state and Mrs. Ogilvy's illness made his stay at the house undesirable, and he therefore established himself at the Ogilvy Arms, in St. Mary's, to be regarded by the town as a model son and nephew, willing to forego all the pleasures of London and Bath to be near his aunt in her distress, and his father, whose presence at Heathergate seemed for a time to be indispensable ; still, though its people moralised upon the change since Violet was seen so often with the Silvers during the summer, none excepting Miss Clavers thought of connecting his presence with her illness. Great was the consternation occasioned by her danger, and very general the sympathy with her parents. Gossiping as the little town could be, even to the verge of evil speaking and slandering, the illness or sorrow

of its people roused the rest to pity and kind offices. The beauty of Violet had been regarded with much interest, as something distinguished in which they all had a right; and while many predicted the worst, and hoped her parents might be resigned, every one, from the little sturdy practitioner, who spared neither himself nor his horses in her behalf, to the carrier who fetched everything which the good will of friends or the doctor's suggestions sent out to Heathergate, was ready to do a willing service for the girl herself and her respected parents.

Mrs. Ogilvy counselled Harry's absence, but his father listened to his assurance that his misery would be unendurable away from the neighbourhood, and could not urge it. Finally, his aunt having partially recovered from the shock of her husband's seizure (the latter having settled into a state of mental imbecility), invited him to remain at the House with his father.

The young, strong life battled with disease, though more than once it seemed as if the fever must be victorious. Dr. Black announced

on one of his visits to the laird, that the day must decide the contest.

"I hope you think favourably of the result?" asked the general while his son sat by with a book in his hand, which he was pretending to read.

"I wish to do so," was the reply; "I trust it may be well with her, for the sake of them all; but I may confess to you, as an uninterested party, that I can scarcely see how the girl is to come through. The fever has been so strong, and her strength is so reduced. Aye, aye; as you say, we maun look above and trust, and as broken ships have come to land."

The general went out with the doctor, and found his son, on his return, in a state of grief so violent that he could do little to calm him, and was fain at last to leave him to himself, and walk down to the Stormonts' to make his daily call of inquiry.

"She's fa'en asleep," said the servant who opened the door, "sin' the doctor was here: atweel I gaed to the door to tak' the leemons the carrier feshed oot, and she'll

never look mair o' a corp' than she did, wi' her een steekit, and her face a' mottled like a dirty fireside. The mistress is laid down wi' a headache, and the minister's oot in the plantin' gin ye're wantin' him."

No, he thought not; he would not intrude at such a moment of anxious dread, and turned sorrowfully homewards, when his son, all wan and worn-looking, came round the corner of the house, and hastened towards the planting without even noticing his father, who continued his walk towards the House of Heathergate.

Mr. Stormont lifted his heavy eyes as the young man approached, but spoke no word; held out his hand, and as he took in the misery of Harry's appearance, tried to say something that might comfort him, but in vain. He wrung his hand, and they paced up and down the narrow belt of wood, until after two or three turns taken in silence, Harry spoke hastily and hoarsely,—

"Let me see her, Mr. Stormont. I will not speak to her; only let me see her."

"Not now—not at this juncture; but if,—

whichever way it is," he said falteringly, "I will promise it if my wife and daughter consider it right; but let me exhort you to self-control, for her life hangs on a thread."

Menie came to the window, held up the white handkerchief which was to be the signal if the patient slept, and saw who was her father's companion.

The doctor looked in again on returning from his rounds before going back to St. Mary's, and thought that her sleep was a trifle more easy.

"If she sleeps for some hours this may be the turning-point for improvement. It must be one way or another, my dear old friend," he said to Mr. Stormont. "I dare not deceive you, but there is room just for a glimmer of hope. She is very weak."

"Let me see her, Dr. Black," said poor Harry, now forgetful of appearances, "I promise you I will go in as softly as possible."

The doctor turned quickly, "And what for?" caught his look of distress, and recollected all that he had heard and seen during

the past summer. Past middle age as he was, he gave the young man's case his immediate and warm sympathy.

"Not now, certainly, unless you wish to be the death of her if she wakes up and sees you; but if you do as I tell you, we will see what Mrs. and Miss Stormont say to it. Leave the minister to himself, and go up to the House, either to your bed or a sofa for an hour or two. I am to be out again about eight in the evening, and shall probably remain here all night; but now you are not to expect to see her until I give leave, and the family consent."

"That's it," he said to himself. "It's not altogether the wetting in the sea, then."

And though he could not have told why, the little practitioner felt more hope from that time. At night the vague hope of the morning was sustained by a decided abatement of her worst symptoms. Dr. Black remained to watch her through the night, and insisted that her mother and sister should leave the room, and lie down if even they did not sleep.

"Do as I desire you," he said. "It is the truth I tell you : there is more hope than there has been for days past, but we are not through the wood by many a step, and you will have plenty of nursing before you. Mrs. Reid is down by in my gig ready when I send for her, and to-morrow you shall begin again. Bid her come up, Miss Menie ; she's a clever woman and a biddable."

Menie went to the door and brought Mrs. Reid into the house with many incoherent thanks for her kindness, and was returning for the doctor's bag and to tell his servant to put up the horse and await his master's orders in the kitchen, when her dress was caught as she stood at the door, and on looking down to see what held it, she saw poor Harry Silver.

"One word," he said : "does the doctor say she will live ?"

"He hopes it—we all hope now."

"Thank God !" he rejoined, and relinquished his hold.

The night passed. Oh, what a night of half misery, half stupefaction, of trembling

prayer, of fainting hope, of doubt and dread, to those watchers! Their worn out natures succumbing to sleep for a time, and then their fear rousing them up to find it had only been for a minute or two; finally, they all arose, and meeting on the stairs, sat down outside the chamber where their loved one lay, and listened to every sound within the sick room, auguring weal or woe whether there was silence or sound. Everything had been prepared within, and the room was quiet save when the doctor's firm tread or Mrs. Reid's soft footfall broke on their ear, as they administered the necessary food and medicines. At length, at six o'clock the door was opened, but Menie alone had courage to look into the doctor's face to read his verdict.

He spoke softly: "Go into your sister's room, my dear; I believe she is past the corner now. Come down and give me a cup of strong tea, mistress, and take one yourself. Then I will take a rest for an hour in a chair, and see Violet before I go up to the House. I have told Mistress Reid what to do, and you can take her place soon. She is

a noble watcher. If I find it all right in an hour, I will not be back until night unless you send for me."

With what different feelings those who tended the sick bed returned to it when hope went with them! The forenoon brought back the anxious lover; and this time he would take no denial.

"I will wait until she is asleep—I will stand where you like—I will speak no word, but I must see her;" and those kindly souls could no longer say him nay.

Mrs. Stormont placed him behind a curtain, where, seeing her, there was no chance of his being seen by her, should she awake. He placed strong control over his feelings, and Mrs. Stormont's precaution took advantage of his promise to submit to her judgment and make the time short.

"Whose foot is it,?" asked the poor patient, as he descended the stairs, with slow and careful tread. "Is it the doctor? Is it Maria? Where am I?" and she dozed again.

Harry Silver spoke no word, took no leave, but passed out from the house, and went

home, having learned a lesson he never afterwards wholly forgot. Though he had seen something of fever and sickness in the East, he had never pictured such a change in the face of his beautiful love, and he felt it very hard to believe that she could ever rise again from her bed of sickness, so wasted and ghastly was she. Nevertheless, though there was fear mingled with it, from that day hope struggled for the ascendancy, and finally held it, until when the earliest primroses were budding among last year's dead leaves in the planting, Violet was sitting up in her father's arm-chair, to receive a visit from Harry Silver.

She was much altered. A close cap with its quilled border sat loosely round the pale and hollow cheeks, once so exquisitely moulded, the closely cropped hair scarcely appearing on her forehead; and it seemed at first as if a change as complete had passed over her mind. The delirious fancies which had run on in a strain of self-reproach—now because she had drawn Tom Fordyce away from her sister; now that she had striven for general

admiration; and then again because she had encouraged some lover unknown to her father and without his sanction—dying out with her returning health, still seemed to have left a shadow of depression behind them; and she would start at night, and call out they were dragging her down into the water, the sound of which gurgled in her ears. She was, indeed, most unlike the gay, self-confident Violet of the past summer. A look of listlessness and woe sat on her face, and she seldom spoke.

Very cautiously Menie ventured to tell her, by her father's permission, how Harry's love had been shown during her sickness; and, when he thought she could bear it, her father spoke to her on the subject, telling her frankly and kindly that if her heart was set upon it he must consent, although, after all the affection Captain Silver had shown, he would fain still, in the view of his alleged failings, withhold a permission which he had refused until he had discovered from her mother how deeply Violet's affections were concerned in the matter.'

General Silver had declined positively to listen to Mrs. Ogilvy's worldly reasonings, and, with the inconsistency even of a mind under the control of religion, felt considerable astonishment at the reluctance with which Mr. Stormont received his advances. He was anxious for his son's happiness, willing to believe the best of him, and to hope much from an early marriage to one brought up by godly and rational instructors. With this beautiful young woman as his companion, he would be free from many temptations to company, wherein his danger had lain. Violet would not have thanked any one for pointing out that this reasoning had selfishness in it, and looked less to what her lot might be hereafter, than to his son's pleadings. Mr. Stormont took counsel with his Marjorie, and she, though tried by the thought of losing her darling child, was not insensible to the position this marriage would give her, nor disposed to take so serious a view of the captain's failings as did her husband. She had, above all, a deeper feeling of the strength of Violet's love, and had suffered much from

the fear of her having been wounded past remedy by her lover's neglect. Menie, summoned to the family counsels, advised that her father should, for his own comfort, try to ascertain how far report had, or had not, done injustice to Harry; and then, if rumour proved to have maligned him by converting an occasional act of folly and intemperance into a usual habit and custom, she thought his ardent attachment to her sister, and hers to him, ought not to be opposed.

She gave this opinion with great diffidence and modesty, and suggested Mrs. Anderson, their old relative at Kirkaldy, as a likely person to give the desired information.

To her Mr. Stormont wrote, and the answer was, on the whole, a favourable one. Mrs. Anderson had known him for many years, and had always heard him spoken of as a pleasant-tempered and well-bred gentleman. There had been gay doings at Denslade since Sir Hector's taking possession of it, and rumour said that he had encouraged his guests in drinking and folly; but only on one occasion had Captain Silver's name been

mixed up in the town talk with those wild doings, and she believed with scarce stronger ground than his happening to be visiting his cousin. Certain fair ladies, who should be nameless, were said to have taken much pains to spread the report, on finding him more insensible to their charms than they desired. For her part, she never saw anything wrong by the young man; and surely it was good promotion for Violet to get such an offer. A postscript was added to say that she had just accidentally had a visit from a cousin of a friend now staying in Kirkaldy, an invalid military man, in fact a former colonel of Captain Silver's regiment, who gave him a high character.

Nothing then remained for Mr. Stormont but to give his consent to Harry's addresses, although his heart was wrung by the thought of the consequences to which his consent must lead—namely, Violet's departure from her family to the evil climate of India. How often, when called upon to comfort the members of his flock who had to part from their children, he had entertained the secret hope

that their lot should never be his, and now both his sons were far from the parent's roof, and his beloved little one, his youngest and fairest, would ere long pass from under it, and belong to another.

Meantime the interview had been asked for and granted. Mrs. Stormont was soon called away from the sitting-room, and Menie, unfaithful sentinel! found something so interesting from her station at the window, that, with a hasty exclamation, "I must really see what the creatures are doing," she, too, went out, and it is to be hoped ministered to the things which walk or things which fly that required her ministry. Certain it is that she returned no more until Harry had taken his departure, and Violet, pale and wearied, lying back on her pillows, whispered to her, with a look of perfect repose, "Menie, he really does love me!" That, and no more. The girl's confidence in his truth gradually bore down all her father's lingering opposition, and so soon as her strength in good measure returned, Harry at once reminded her that his leave of absence was drawing

rapidly to an end, and that he could not return to India without her.

Her mother had kept this conclusion out of her thoughts as much as possible, and now expressed strong indignation at the unseemly haste.

"Her linen not spun, and no time to learn various things most needful for the mistress of a house. A mere bairn herself. Could the captain not come home for her some years hence—nay, might she not in two or three years go out, as Miss Harestane did to be married to her major?"

But her husband, who from the first had schooled himself to look to this event, said, "No, no, Marjorie. You know well that cannot be. Let our daughter go with her husband."

That night, when she said good-night, he held her hand in his, and spoke gravely, "Violet, my bairn, say to me what is in your mind, without fear or favour. Are you willing to go abroad with this young man?"

And she replied softly, but clearly, "To the ends of the earth, father."

The aunts came forward with bridal gifts,

so that Violet might not owe anything for her outfit to her husband's family. Harry's debts were paid, and his father settled on them a liberal allowance.

We must pass over the sorrow of the parting, when the wedding was over, in the old familiar sitting-room. Violet was handed into a carriage by her bridegroom, and driven through the streets of St. Mary's, to the excitement of all beholders, *en route* for England, where the general was to join them, and see them on board their ship for Calcutta.

Her father gave her away; her brother-in-law married her. The circumstances of the Ogilvy family prevented any of its members, excepting General Silver, from being present; unless, indeed, Mrs. Ogilvy had proved propitious, and spared Ellen Smith to the often-repeated requests of her uncle and cousin. She paid a visit to them before the wedding, and once or twice before had stolen down to pour out her woes to Menie; but with the strange mixture of delicacy and self-restraint existing in her mind side by side with

her reprehensible qualities of jealousy and inquisitiveness, she refrained from telling that Madam's displeasure with her nephew's choice was the cause of her incessant ill-temper.

"If it were not for my grandpapa," she said, "I would bear it no longer. More than once I have made up my mind to run away, and take my chance of working or dying; but the thought of him, and how kind he was sometimes to me, keeps me beside him to help Saunders. When he dies I must go away. I could not live with her. She really hates me, and I——"

"Oh, hush, hush! never say that word. You'll see when the time comes for you to give up your present duty; there will come a light on your path, if you look out for it. You just try and bear this trial, and not give Mrs. Ogilvy more words than you can help. Poor woman! she has her cross in the helplessness and daily-increasing weakness of the husband she so leant upon. Can you find nothing to occupy your time and interest you when your grandpapa is not wanting you? I am sure papa will be glad to lend you books."

"Thank you; not my kind of books, I doubt. Occupy me! Mrs. Ogilvy takes care of that; and as to interest, do *you* find anything very interesting in white seam, or setting folks' patterns right when they go wrong, and grounding the flower pieces that are shown to friends who say 'How industrious you are, Mrs. Ogilvy! what a worker! and all that tedious grounding so evenly done!' It was quite different when the laird was well and about. There was always something happening then, and I had both occupation and interest finding out things; but latterly there has been nothing to tax my ingenuity: just Harry talking, like a straightforward idiot (excuse me); the general reading the public prints to his sister-in-law, or wise books to himself, and talking plain common sense. No, Menie; I am wrong even to pretend to speak of *him* as anything but the good, kind friend he has been to me, and would be if Madam would let him. But, Menie, she will not listen to him about my being at the wedding. It is *so* hard; though after all it would have been leaving grandpapa for a long time!"

The girl was evidently very much chagrined, and Menie could only soothe her with promises that when she was at leisure again she would go up to the House as often as Mrs. Ogilvy wished, so as to set Ellen more at liberty. General Silver left the day after his son and daughter for the purpose of seeing them embark ; and in the reaction from all the excitement and occupation of the last few months, the Stormont family felt as if the world was suddenly a blank. There had been little intercourse between them and Mrs. Ogilvy of late ; and Violet's farewell visit to the House, paid in the presence of Harry and his father, had been cold and stiff, though not so trying as Menie felt hers must be when a message summoned her there, and her promise to Ellen led her at once to obey it. There had not been great cordiality in Madam's manner in old times ; there was none on this occasion ; and Menie's naturally warm temper chafed under the studiously "keep your distance" style in which she was received. However, she had in a manner prepared her mind for something of the kind,

and fortified herself by every means against its effects; keeping as much as possible to general subjects, and finding, or seeming to find, the lady's carpet-work, with the progress she had made in it, a safe and interesting topic. Not so was she permitted to escape. Mrs. Ogilvy, in prosperity, was not a wise woman, nor endowed with the best of tempers. Just now, in the monotony of that sick house, with her plans for her favourite nephew crossed, and Maria Silver removed from her by her marriage and perversion, on which she looked with strong, if rather ignorant horror, she was, to say the least, no wiser nor better tempered. Her regard and respect for her brother-in-law and Mr. Stormont restrained her; but in their absence, she was minded to give poor Menie the advantage of a free statement of her opinions.

"Well," she said, as Menie put in the last stitch of a "cobble" she had amended in the work, "so this precious marriage is over. It reconciles me to the seclusion we are compelled to live in that I do not hear the comments the world makes on it. I had a

letter from my aunt, old Lady Betty, the other day, and she tells me everybody is talking of Harry Silver's romance; and says how strange it is that he, who might have married to his £50,000, or more, should have thrown himself away upon a girl without family or fortune."

Menie knew something of Lady Betty, and thought it very likely that she had taken the opportunity of giving her own ideas as the voice of the multitude; so she allowed the observation to pass. But when Madam went on to censure Violet's conduct in taking her nephew in, and her parents for allowing it, nay, conniving at it, Menie's patience came to an end; and her biographer confesses, with shame, that she retorted with so much vehemence, and spoke so many home truths red hot, that Mrs. Ogilvy was routed, and had recourse to tears. The sight of those recalled Menie to herself. She apologised and soothed; and a truce was there and then agreed upon, its terms on the one side being silence on that offensive subject, on the other frequent visits and patience.

CHAPTER XI.

FELLOW-PASSENGERS.

ON the deck of the *Hurst Castle* stood a group, consisting of our friends General Silver and his son and daughter-in-law, with an old friend, Mrs. Jones, whom the general rejoiced to find among the passengers. She was going to rejoin her husband, who was in command of a regiment stationed up country, after having left her only son with her relatives in Ireland. To her good offices Violet was warmly commended by her father-in-law, when, taking leave of them with much affection, he went ashore, and watched the convoy all out of sight.


Mrs. Jones promised her old friend, with much hearty warmth, to be a friend to his daughter-in-law; and from the day of sailing until they parted she kept her word in her energetic, original manner, at once suggesting how her luggage should be arranged for her convenience, and adding, as circumstances

arose, every counsel, practical, religious, and social, which occurred to her experience.

I do not know that the passengers of that day differed much in station and character from those who now travel with so much more luxury and comfort by the Peninsular and Oriental steamers ; but the time they were condemned to spend in each other's society was, from being so much longer, far more trying : petty grievances, fancied slights, scarcely having time to graze the thin skin between each landing-place now, were in old days apt to rankle and fester into bad wounds ; and, in some instances, trifling quarrels led to serious consequences where strong principle did not control selfishness and pride, aggravated by idleness, ennui, and the physical irritability produced by climate.

It was a strange world into which the inexperienced bride was thrown ; and well was it for her that her Mentor proved to be one to whom she at once felt drawn, and who adopted her immediately into her large motherly heart. Seated on the deck with her husband, she gazed on the receding land with a feeling in

which sorrow for the home and friends she had left scarcely did more than take off the edge of her pleasure in the present, and almost childish anticipation of her future; and here they were joined by Mrs. Jones, who, sitting down by them, entered at once into warm Irish descriptions of the child she had left behind her; of the mother and sisters who had received him with such enthusiasm, and loved him with a love almost equal to her own, and of her grief in bidding him farewell; with the stronger feeling leading her back to share the fatigues and privations of her husband, until all the better part of Violet's nature was touched, while her husband rejoiced that his wife should make her start under auspices so perfectly unexceptionable. Violet had scarcely time to wonder, in a confused, disjointed manner, why Mrs. Jones's ideas seemed so full of fatigue and privation, and ran so little on the splendour and magnificence she looked for in the East, when she succumbed to her fate, and found no difficulty in obeying the first part of Mrs. Jones's advice—"to give in to it." The



second part she found impossible, although that lady proceeded to act on her own instructions.

"I always give in to it; and then when I get over it, I call for a glass of strong ale, shut my eyes not to see the oscillations, drink it, and fall asleep; it is all over until the sea is rough again."

"Should she ever feel well again?"

Poor Violet! Mrs. Jones appeared to her a terrible friend when she insisted on her leaving her cabin, and lying on the deck under an awning, though she found reason to thank her for her vigorous friendship which would work for good, regardless of the opposition of its object, when after a week or ten days she was able to walk about, and occupy herself with such literature as the united stores of the passengers afforded, and with her needlework; the latter suggested by the active Mrs. Jones, who, when her husband was absent, bestowed upon her much valuable advice culled from her own experience as the wife of a soldier, and in Indian life. Sometimes, too, Harry read to them; and, being

anxious to improve his wife's accent and idiom, gave her lessons, half in jest, half in earnest, as to the framing of her northern tongue to the usages of English. Frequently, Violet bore this with patience; at other times pouted, and reminded him, in a petted way, how little he had made of such defects in their early acquaintance. This was, however, only when the increasing heat made her more irritable; for her own quick wit and observation during the time she had spent among Harry's friends caused her to wish to get rid of her native accent, and to avoid the Scotticisms which so evidently afforded them amusement.

"She's a most sweet-tempered creature, then, as well as a lovely one, Captain Silver," said Mrs. Jones on one occasion, when Violet was lying down, and she had claimed his arm for her daily walk on the deck. "There are not many that would take your quizzing so peaceably. I should not have liked Jones to try it with me. And after all, her Scotch is the Scotch of a lady. There's where you English provoke me in regard of ourselves.

‘Brogue, brogue!’ you say; sure it’s all brogue; and no difference made between me that belongs to one of the oldest families in the south, and the girl caring the cows. If your wife spoke like that Miss Strahan, who is going out to be married ‘upon’ her cousin, the storekeeper at Colombo, you might worry the poor thing; but it’s my opinion you’ll just make Mrs. Silver afraid to speak, and prevent us hearing the words that drop from her pretty mouth, like the fairy gifts in the nursery tale. And now let me release you to go to her, while I speak to the young woman I told you about yesterday.”

And she left him to go into the fore-castle to speak to her countrywoman, a delicate-looking girl with two children, going out to join her husband.

“The ridgment wint out from Cark, me lady, in a sthransport, and I couldn’t go thin; but Andra’ has sint me some money, and me relations has helped, and I’m going out to him; he do be in the — Fut.”

“My husband’s regiment! And what is your husband’s name?”

“Mulloy, Andra’ Mulloy; that’s his name, ’deed and it is, me lady.”

“And had you no friend with more sense than to let you take out young children to India? It’s——” she paused as she looked into the woman’s face, and saw the wistful eyes. “It’s not a good climate for little children.”

“Och! to hear the likes of that! But sure they’re best wid their mother, livin’ or dyin’, if it’s that you mane, ma’am;” and two heavy tears fell from her eyes.

Poor soul! she was very ill; and many a visit did Mrs. Jones and Nancy her servant, a soldier’s widow and a kindred spirit, pay to her; and many were the comforts they devised for the mother, many the hours they kept her children. Violet and Mary Mulloy looked on Mrs. Jones as a ministering angel. Far other opinions were held by the two Miss Stauntons, going out to their uncle in Calcutta, and their chaperon, a grass widow, whose husband, about twice her own age, was an indigo planter up country. Mrs. Thomson, this lady, was not a great many

years older than her charges ; and all three were equally disposed for flirtation. The unmarried girls evidently had matrimony on their minds ; walked the deck with the middle-aged bachelor, captain of the *Hurst Castle*, danced with the ensigns going out to their regiments, or played draughts and chess with the doctor and two elderly men returning to wind up their affairs before settling in England for good.

"Silly little, ill-conditioned, presumptuous fools," said the highly-provoked Mrs. Jones. "I shall interfere, and save that well-looking young man from them. They have discovered that his first cousin is a peer, and they are besieging him in the most barefaced manner. I am afraid he will entangle himself ; and their uncle is high up in the service, and will not be sorry to get one of them off his hands, by threatening him, so I cannot allow it."

Violet smiled at the eagerness with which she assumed her self-constituted guardianship, and thought of St. Mary's and its vicinity, where flirting, real or supposed, was at once put under the ban of female authority. She

watched it all with amused interest, wondering which side would win, how Miss Clavers' management would have differed from Mrs. Jones's, and what her mother and Menie would have thought of those bold girls.

Another time Mrs. Thomson, the chaperon, would say, "Mr. Courtenay has just been telling us that there's a dale of difference, between the hate here and the hate in Cork, and do you know we never found out for ever so long he meant to speak of the weather. Is that really the way ladies and gentlemen talk in Ireland, Mrs. Jones, or is he trotting us?"

Before she could answer, the elder Miss Staunton broke in,—“Dear! Mrs. Thomson, don't trouble Mrs. Jones with that nonsense now, I want to ask her how that dear sweet Mrs. Silver is; she left us so early last evening, and Captain Silver was *so* amusing. My sister Letty said she never did hear anything so droll. We were trying to persuade him to sing, and he *would* be so funny with illustrations of his difficulties in learning to sing, and the various methods by which they had tried to teach him. We died of laughing, and

Edmund Antrobus said it was as good as Liston."

"Edmund Antrobus! Pray Miss Staunton, if I may take the liberty of asking, *did* you know Mr. Antrobus before you came into this ship?"

"Oh, dear no! but then you know one sees so much of people in a long voyage like this, one feels to have known them all one's life, and," turning with Mrs. Jones, who was walking away in disgust, "to let you into a secret," (here she lowered her voice), "I believe he certainly will propose to Letty before the voyage is over, or rather before we get to the Cape; so that I look upon him quite as a brother-in-law, and think I may as well call him by his Christian name at once."

"But how if he never is your brother-in-law? That would not surprise me."

"But I do think it indeed, Mrs. Jones; for he said to Letty the other evening, that though Letitia Staunton is a very pretty name, she will change it; and if he did not mean she will take his, what could he mean?"

"I have not an idea, any more than you have, but let me give you a piece of advice:

wait until he is your brother-in-law before you call him Edmund."

Charlotte Staunton walked off in high displeasure to be greeted by Letty with—

"What have you been saying to Mrs. Jones? Come along, and we will go with Mrs. Thomson, and turn out all our things, and see that they are not spoiling. I have had a quarrel with that horrid Antrobus about his saying that Mrs. Silver is the only beauty on board, and George Mortimer sided with me, and they are on the point of having a row, so come away at once. Edmund is so disagreeable, I shall not be sorry when he leaves us at the Cape."

"Not sorry? Oh, Letty! and I thought he was going to propose to you."

"If he had I should not have taken him. Mrs. Thomson has found out he has nothing but his pay. His mother is a widow, and he has seven sisters, so that would never do. There he is, talking to Mrs. Jones. I dare say it is about us. Do come away."

And so it was, for Mrs. Jones had come suddenly upon Antrobus and Mortimer, hot

and quarrelsome, had calmed them down by her tact, and walked off with her favourite to remonstrate with him on the danger of carrying his attentions too far.

"You are very kind," he said; "but I made up such an account of my family to Mrs. Thomson, that that watchful chaperon will not suffer me to approach her charges any more. Think, ma'am, of my being only an ensign in a marching regiment, and having seven sisters. She took fright at once I saw, so I did not think it necessary to say that four of them are married."

A lecture followed on his pursuits in general, with special strictures on his flirting and gaming, and he, while parrying the home-thrusts his monitress did not spare him, said "he was compelled to do something to wile away the time."

"Why not read? I can lend you several most admirable works, including a commentary, written by your own cousin, Lady Georgiana."

"I was not pleased with him for refusing it," she said to Violet, afterwards. "I think nothing of it myself, but it showed a want of

family affection in him not to read it, if it had only been to say, 'I do not agree with what my relative, Lady Georgiana, says on such and such a passage.'"

Still she stirred up Captain Silver and his wife to admit the young man into their society. She netted a purse for him, and "took the liberty," she said to him, "of putting a souvenir into it," for which the young fellow first blushed, and then thanked her with moist eyes.

The voyage went on as usual. They had an alarm of a strange sail several times, and saw what was taken for an American cruiser, on the Brazilian coast, and were signalled to keep close to the convoy; ran with a fair wind to the Cape, and landed their passengers.

During all this time Mrs. Jones walked the deck at stated hours; read at the time fixed by herself, and idled even, with method; visited her countrywoman in the fore-cabin, advised Violet, lectured Captain Silver, patronised the young men, and bade defiance to Mrs. Thomson and her charges; when their hitherto prosperous voyage had a check, and in the

Indian Ocean, the weather, more sultry than usual, brought sickness among them. At first only the fore-cabin passengers suffered. A heavy lassitude stole upon them, which, at the beginning, was attributed to climate, but when first one and then another lay in their berths, and the doctor and his assistants were occupied with them, a terrible whisper of fever spread throughout the company.

"Change places with me, Mr. Mortimer," said Letty Staunton. "Sit between me and the doctor. I know you are not afraid of anything, because I have heard you say so, and *I* am afraid of sitting next to Dr. Lang."

In vain he assured her there was no infection. She would not come near him. She burnt feathers and deluged herself with vinegar and eau de Cologne.

"It is in the air," the doctor said to Mrs. Jones. "The fever itself is not infectious, but the confined air of the cabins favours its increase, and that girl will certainly be down in it if she goes on as she is doing."

"Can I be of use to you?"

"Of the greatest. The poor women are too

frightened to wait upon the sick as they require; but, Mrs. Jones, I must not conceal from you that you run a risk in that contaminated air, although the fever itself is not infectious. This ship is very ill ventilated."

"Even so, I shall do all I can. We are all immortal till our summons comes; and I am really not at all afraid, nor—only I hope I say this humbly and without rashness—liable to infection. Of course I shall take every precaution in my power."

So saying, she retired to her cabin, wrote a long letter to her husband, and one to her friends in Ireland; put on a loose washing dress; removed her personal attendant into her cabin, and then went among the sick,—gave courage to the women, and taught them how to carry out the doctor's orders; used very strong expressions when they were inclined to disobey; exhorted, prayed, coaxed, and scolded, and finally rejoiced in the recovery of all her fore-cabin patients, except the poor Irish-woman, who only came through her feverish attack to settle into a decline, which left no hope of her meeting her husband. Very

tenderly was she cared for by her countrywoman, and many and fervent were the blessings she showered on her head.

Meanwhile a kind of desperate recklessness seemed to take possession of the greater part of the cabin passengers. Most of them appeared resolved to ignore all that was passing in the ship. The ladies flirted, dressed, and squabbled among themselves more than ever, while the gentlemen were equally resolute in the pursuit of their own amusements. Whether because their part of the ship was better ventilated, or their food more wholesome, all had as yet escaped.

Violet, accustomed to her father and mother visiting the sick, felt no fear, and had begged to be allowed to join her friend in tending the stricken; but neither Mrs. Jones nor her husband would hear of it, although the latter did not forbid her going into Mrs. Jones's cabin whenever she could retire to it for rest or quiet: and when the fever subsided, and Mary Mulloy's declining state only required the occasional supervision which Mrs. Jones's maid, incited by her mistress's example, was

very willing to give, their intercourse increased, and took a deeper tone from all that had passed.

Violet had indeed her own cause for disquiet, but would not on any account divulge it to her friend.

During that time of unhealthy excitement, Harry had more than once been induced to drink more freely than he ought to have done, of the wine ordered in great abundance by all the gentlemen, to drown the feeling of discomfort prevailing in the ship. She trembled lest the temptation should prove habitual, yet scarcely knew how to approach the subject to him.

Play also began to run high, and constant disputing followed.

Deprived of Mrs. Jones's society in the cabin, she felt solitary, and saw how much that lady's position and weight of character had done hitherto when employed on the side of right. She held aloof from Mrs. Thomson and the Miss Stauntons as much as possible, and from some even more objectionable half-caste girls returning to their homes after a

couple of years at an English boarding-school. Harry had objected to her making any acquaintance with the Scotch girl going to Colombo, and now, unawed by Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Thomson and her young friends took pleasure in drawing Captain Silver away from her. Except by a direct appeal to him she knew not how to alter things, and while reflecting on the desirability of such a measure, and watching the last rays of the sun upon the water, she heard a faint cry, and, looking round, saw Charlotte Staunton leaning against a seat, from which she had just risen, and looking very ill, and very frightened.

She rose at once, and succeeded in catching her just as she was falling, when the first mate who was passing came to her assistance, and remarked, "We will take her to her cabin, ma'am; and here, Tom, call the doctor, and bid him come to Miss Staunton. I doubt it is the fever."

And so it was; not, as it turned out, a very severe attack in itself, but made more tedious by the unmanageable fears and waywardness of the patient. The quiet, deter-

mined doctor alone could manage her, and by his resolute air of authority, get her to take the proper remedies.

"If you do not I must decline attending you." And it was a positive relief to her weak mind to be so compelled.

Mrs. Thomson and her sister at once declared their inability to attend her, and they succeeded in persuading one of the officers of the ship to give up his cabin to them, sending their maid into the tainted atmosphere, as they considered it, to bring out what they needed.

Their conduct thoroughly disgusted Captain Silver, especially when he contrasted it with that of his wife. She satisfied him that if there were risk she had already run it, and was permitted by him to share with Miss Staunton's maid, for Mrs. Jones was by this time quite knocked up, the task of tending and soothing poor Charlotte. Happily the trial was of short duration, and the fever fit passed more rapidly than the others had done. Hers was also the last case, and as soon as the doctor pronounced her convalescent, and Violet

could leave her, she was received by her husband with so many praises for her heroism, and with a delight so evident, that she willingly forgot all her previous uneasiness.

“The captain says we may look out for a breeze, Violet; and if it is not a very bad one, I shall not regret it, for a bad spell seems to have been over the ship of late. A strong breeze will blow it away.”

Ay, indeed; before the night closed in, the little cloud no bigger than a man’s hand had overspread the heavens, and the tropical storm burst upon them. Sea and sky, wind and wave raged against the ship, and in the simple words of that old story of shipwreck, “all hope that they should be saved was taken away.”

“Please God, my darling, we shall get safe to land yet,” said Mrs. Jones to Violet; and then to the other terrified women huddled into the common cabin in their fear,—“If we are lost we are as near heaven by sea as by land. Let us pray.”

And when the day broke, it broke upon waves still rolling mountains high, upon decks encumbered with splintered masts and torn

rigging, while the ship laboured as if at every plunge she must settle down for ever. But the captain knew that the worst of the gale was over, and sent to the terror-stricken passengers a word of hope.

Then came hours of alternate fear and hope, of hope and fear, until the most desponding among them felt courage revive, and the storm which had wrecked three of the ships sailing in their company died down into a fair breeze, which carried the *Hurst Castle*, all disabled as she was, into Saugor Roads. There they consigned to a watery grave Mary Mulloy, whose end the storm had hastened. Only just escaped from the fear of death themselves, the passengers and crew assembled with serious faces to hear the captain read the burial service, but the emotion passed away, in most instances, quickly enough.

The dark young ladies and their darker aunt chattered, after their peculiar manner, about their expectation of home and its inmates. Letty Staunton told Charlotte that the fever had not improved her complexion,—the charm upon which they had principally reckoned for

giving them superiority over the Calcutta belles; and Charlotte retorted that it did not signify, because the doctor had proposed to her, and meant immediately to apply to her uncle as soon as they landed, and if his answer proved favourable, as no doubt it would, Dr. Lang would at once settle down as a practitioner in Calcutta. Mrs. Thomson told every one who would listen to her, how the thought of meeting her dear William agitated her. Mrs. Jones gave directions about her luggage and Mary Mulloy's children. In short that air of dangers escaped, and that joyful anticipation of land, be it our own or a foreign one, which reigns in the breast of all at the end of a long voyage, pervaded the *Hurst Castle*, until the end really came, and they anchored safely in Diamond Harbour.

CHAPTER XII.

"WOODED, AND MARRIED, AND A'."

IN the pinnace which waited for Captain and Mrs. Silver, was Thomas Fordyce, and pleasant were their greetings, short their adieux to their fellow-passengers. Mrs. Jones at once proceeded on her journey to Cawnpore, where her husband was stationed. Mr. Staunton, who came for his nieces, received from the still grateful Charlotte so warm an account of Mrs. Silver's kindness, as to draw from him many civil things, including a hearty enforcement of the girls' wish, that they might all meet again soon. Mrs. Thomson looked in vain for her husband, or some message from him; the Stauntons remained with her until all the other passengers had left the ship, and, taking pity on her forlorn state, invited her to go to Chowringhee with them, until she should have tidings from her husband. Scarcely had they left the ship's side, when a boat approached it, and a voice

called out a question as to whether Mrs. Thomson were on board. To the information that she was in the pinnacle ahead, with Mr. Staunton and his nieces, the same voice, the owner of which was by this time on the deck of the *Hurst Castle*, replied, “A precious good thing for me too! Old Bill died a fortnight ago of cholera morbus, and I am glad to escape the shindy his wife will think it decent to make. Give me her address, and I will send her a chit, and go straight back to Chinsurah. Among friends she will soon be all right again. The worst of it is Thomson has left little behind him.”

Much had Tom to tell, much to hear, for his mother's letters were short, and contained only outlines of family history, though never omitting mention of what to him was worth all beside—Menie, and a message from her as often as ever the mother's conscience permitted her to give it, separate from the general family greetings. Either from accident or a desire to tease, Violet left her name out of the history she gave to her cousin, and obliged him to ask after her by name,

when he had tried various ways of introducing her into the conversation. Then did Violet make up for her omission, and Tom dwelt eagerly on the praises of her sister's kindness to her during her illness. It was a time of refreshment in that far off land, and seemed as if it might be followed by many others. This however was not the case; they met frequently in society, but Captain Silver's manner to Violet's kinsman was not sufficiently cordial to induce him to go often to Barrackpore, and Violet was soon too much engrossed by society, and the ways of the country to feel his absence. To a girl whose views of life had been so limited, the pomp of Eastern life was for a time most imposing. The parade of so many attendants both in the house, and when she drove out, or went in a palanquin, the silver maces borne before the dignitaries whose acquaintance she soon made, the magnificent dresses and jewels, both of the British and natives at whose houses she visited, charmed her; and though it crossed her mind that it was a pity Harry did not take more to Tom, she was far too

devoted to her husband to have any will but his, and both of them fully enjoyed their popularity, a popularity owing as much to her beauty and engaging manners, as to his introductions, and his father's long connection with the country. It was a long time before Violet came to good Bishop Heber's reflection, when, ten years after this time, he arrived in Calcutta, and went through a similar experience. "After all, this state has nothing very dazzling in it; a crowd of half-naked followers is no splendid show," etc. The Bishop of Calcutta looked on things with different eyes to Mrs. Silver, and her position was one of danger, considering that her failings did not lie on the side of diffidence, and too low an estimate of herself. The old bright manner returned, and with it came a shade of self-assertion, which she had not shown before. Among her early engagements was an invitation from Charlotte Staunton, to be present at her wedding. "My uncle," she wrote "consented at once to my marrying Dr. Lang, whom he knew by report, and though it is very dreadful about poor Mrs. Thomson,

we cannot help it. She goes to a friend for the wedding day, and will then return to keep Letty company, by my uncle's desire. We are inviting Mr. Fordyce, whose acquaintance we have made since landing, and Letty (but please do not tell) thinks he's the best looking man she has seen in India."

The wedding was a splendid one, and the company distinguished. Provoked, she knew not why, by Charlotte's mention of Tom Fordyce in connection with Letty, Violet saw them frequently together, and owned to herself, that there was truth in the admiration the bridesmaid shared with the bride. In full dress, with her fresh European complexion, fine eyes, and graceful carriage, Letty was decidedly a belle, and Tom led her in to dinner, and talked and laughed with her as if he enjoyed it. Colonel Oglethorpe, Harry's colonel, drove Mr. Fordyce home, and rallied him on the conquest he had made.

"Your turn next, my boy," he said, in a tone of hilarity, induced by Mr. Staunton's generous cheer. "Great beauty Mrs. Silver! Ah! your cousin! indeed! Yes, yes; Harry is

in high luck; but you'll be in no less if you get that handsome Miss Staunton. Don't know whether I don't admire her quite as much. Nice little fortune too I am told, from her father, my old acquaintance. Try your luck there, my boy; didn't look at dinner as if she would say no to you. Well, well; you need not contradict so vehemently. If you don't, another will."

"They say, colonel, that 'happy's the wooing that's not long a doing;' and if so, our couple to-day have a good chance, for it is just a fortnight since the *Hurst Castle* came in, and they tell me the engagement was then only a week old."

"And what of it? Bless you! that's quite a respectable time here. Why I've known people that never saw one another before they met aboard ship, married before they landed in Calcutta,—ay, even at the Cape; and as for our soldiers' wives, why—they're often promised in their husband's life-time."

"Most horrible!"

"You say so because you are young and new to this country, where death mows down

people so fast that the survivors grow as callous as the natives. Besides, after all, these hasty marriages turn out remarkably well,—far better than many where the fair damsel and her innamorato wear one another to fiddle strings by the jealousies and misunderstandings of a long engagement at home; or where the girl stays at home losing bloom and beauty, and the man knocks about the world, picturing his Rosa Matilda just as he left her. Some day fortune shakes the pagoda-tree, and he writes for her to come out; he is stout and bald, and she is—well, not the Rosa Matilda he left. What is the consequence? mutual disappointment, and a cat-and-dog life.”

“You are quite oracular, Colonel Oglethorpe.”

“Well, I ought to have some experience in these things by this time. My Rosa Matilda has been a wedded wife, with my consent, many a long year ago, and though an old bachelor, still, I have seen many weddings, and queer ones, enough to point a moral, and adorn a tale,—queer? yes very

queer; but the queerest I ever had anything to do with was in your country, when a young fellow with whom I had ridden and fished a good deal, came to me one afternoon, and asked me to be his best man as he called it. I was only a youngster at the time, and thought it would be good sport; but I doubted getting leave to remain, our regiment having to march next day. 'So much the better,' he said, and there was something in his tone and look so unlike a gay bridegroom that I began not to like it. 'It is to-night I want your services, and when you see the business out, you will also see why I asked you to be silent concerning it, till I give you leave to speak.' 'Is it an affair of honour?' I asked, 'Yes,' he said, laughing grimly; 'but not what you mean by the question. Come, Jack, be a man, and do not fail me at this pinch; but meet me at such an hour.' So I met him at that hour, for I was young and reckless, and I was very fond of him, and he drove me in a gig for several miles, to a little village, beyond which we came to a plain-looking, common

stone house, standing in a garden. By its gate stood a man whom I recognised as my friend's servant, and a woman wrapped up in a cloak, and with a plaid wrapped round her head. I could not see her face; but I believe she was crying, and my friend spoke a few words to her in a low tone, as if to comfort her. I felt very uncomfortable, and wished myself in barracks again; but how much more fervently did I wish it, when, after knocking sharply at the door, and asking a stupid wench who opened it if the minister were in, she opened the door of a common looking little sitting-room, and my friend told its occupant, an old man employed in writing and imbibing whisky toddy, that he required his services to marry him to the girl who accompanied him. The old chap demurred, when, to my horror, Ludovick—tut, tut, Lawrence or Lewis we will say,—pulled out a pistol, and insisted on being obeyed. I suppose it was all right; it was not the least like our marriage service, and when he put the question to the girl, she only bowed her head, so that I did not hear her voice; but I saw

her hand which held her plaid, and it was not that of a lady. A paper was given to my friend, and we saw the old divine return to his twofold occupation before the door was closed behind us. I was driven back to the town where I was quartered, in a very uneasy frame of mind; but we marched next day, and I never met my friend again. I took very good care not to make minute inquiries concerning that part of the country for a long time; and we went to the West Indies, where accidentally I heard one day that the hero of my story was dead; but whether he acknowledged that night's exploit, or who was then made his wife, I never found out. Quite a romance, was it not? Dare say the young fellow tied a mill-stone round his neck. Sorry to let any of my youngsters know that I ever played such pranks. But, as I was saying, fine girls those two Stauntons! horrid old fellow the uncle!" And so he went on becoming more and more discursive as the air acted on the wine he had drunk.

Tom turned the strange story over in his mind, and wondered how much of it was

true, and felt he was ridiculous to connect it with the old history of Captain Ogilvy's early life. In the same regiment with Captain Silver, Oglethorpe must certainly have found out his connection with the Heathergate family ; but then again, if he had found it out, he was not likely to introduce that knowledge into his recital, very evidently drawn from him by the wedding and its feasting. At all events, Tom resolved to write down what he had listened to, if only as a curious history, and to watch for an opportunity to draw out from the colonel any information that might throw further light on his narrative,—for instance, where he had been stationed in Scotland, the families he had known there, although he reflected, that considering the injury which his ever having been mixed up in such an affair might inflict, it would not prove easy to appeal from Colonel Oglethorpe drunk to Colonel Oglethorpe sober. It proved not only difficult, but impossible. No opportunity for private and confidential talk occurred again ; nay, more, from that evening Colonel Oglethorpe avoided Tom, and seemed to have

taken some dislike to him—a marked and unpleasant change from their former footing, and one which he seemed resolved should not be explained.

Letty Staunton, in her usual impulsive, foolish manner, showed a marked preference for Tom, and seized every opportunity of meeting him, in which Mrs. Thomson covertly abetted her, though Charlotte, restrained by her husband, did not, as in bygone times, fall in with their plans, and so wholesome was marital influence that she even refrained from taking Mrs. Silver into her confidence concerning Letty's wish, and the chances of its being accomplished, contenting herself with throwing her sister into the society of other gentlemen as well as Tom, whenever her hospitable husband chose to have dinner parties.

Both girls cultivated the society of Mrs. Silver, to whom the state of things soon became more apparent than to Mr. Fordyce. Colonel Ogleshorpe was actually jealous of the civilian, and was as anxious to secure Letitia's regard, as the other was careless of it.

At length came the finale. Six weeks after their arrival in India, Mr. Staunton proposed marriage to the recently widowed Mrs. Thomson, and was accepted. Her bereavement had served as an excuse for not accompanying Letty into society, while it threw her more into the company of her host, to whom she made herself so agreeable that he resolved to brave the ridicule of his intimates, and give a mistress to his somewhat disorderly household, trying to make them and himself believe that in Mrs. Thomson he had, for the first time, found a woman fit to replace his lost Arabella, who, poor thing, only survived their arrival in India six weeks, forty years before, so that scarce any one excepting the widower could testify to any resemblance between the two wives. There had been many passages of arms between Letty and her quondam friend before the time when her uncle announced his engagement, coupled with a coldly-expressed wish that the widow would still remain until she found another home. After giving Mrs. Thomson her views upon the subject, in a strain which made their future companionship

almost an impossibility, she rushed off to pour out her woes and the news of her uncle's marriage to Charlotte, who was no less indignant, with that "vile intriguing woman." Dr. Lang, however, restrained his wife's vehemence, and told both of them that the match was a suitable one enough, and that they ought to be pleased that their uncle was making himself more respectable by it.

"It would never do," he said, "for Letty to leave the house until after the wedding, by which time, he doubted not, something else would turn up; meantime she had better stay and spend the day with her sister."

To tiffin came Colonel Ogleshorpe, perhaps by accident, and Letty's pensive expression completed her conquest.

"She will not take him, surely," said her sister to the doctor, when in confidence he prophesied the result that evening. "Poor bald, old gentleman! why he looks as old as papa did when he died. Ah! she will wait for that nice-looking Mr. Fordyce."

"Then I doubt she *will* wait. Now don't you meddle, but let your sister do as she

likes. She cannot stay on with the new Mrs. Staunton, and though I should be very glad that she made her home with us, I am quite sure she likes too well to rule not to prefer a home of her own. Oglethorpe is a fine old fellow, and bears an excellent character. I think, all things considered, Letitia is in luck."

Letitia, with characteristic prudence, weighed the circumstances, and did take him, after shedding in private a few tears over her dead hopes of a younger and gayer bridegroom.

Mr. Staunton gave a joyful consent, having had a hint from his intended bride that he had exceeded his credentials in offering Letty a home in what was to be "her house." Both marriages took place before the ladies had been two months in India, the event being hurried by an order for Colonel Oglethorpe's regiment to go up to Baugulpore.

Violet's ideas of Eastern magnificence were beginning to change a little under the experience of wanting the common boon of cool air and water, her country's birthright; and, suffering from low feverish attacks, she found

the journey very trying, made, as it was, in all attainable luxury. She had, too, been so accustomed hitherto to act as the great lady of the regiment, that she submitted with a bad grace to giving what the colonel's lady was resolute in demanding. Letty had married for position and consequence, and she would have them; and by a series of petty tyrannies inflicted many a wound on Violet's pride and self-esteem. Both husbands received their complaints and depreciative remarks in private with determined repression. They were old and attached friends, and their wives must make no attempt to lessen their friendship; so that an outward appearance was kept up, although the shrewd Irish wife of the doctor of the regiment said it was plain to be seen it was only “from the teeth out.”

They had not been long in their new quarters when the —— regiment was, with a portion of one or two others, ordered up to the attack of a hill fort, garrisoned by hostile Ghorkas. Two or three companies of European invalids and native troops being left for the defence of the place.

Poor Violet's grief and anxiety in parting with her husband were extreme, and she would fain have fallen back even on Letty for comfort and companionship, but Mrs. Oglethorpe felt no anxiety about her husband, only fear for what she considered their inefficient protection. "She felt a perfect conviction," she said, "that they would all return in safety—those cowardly fools of natives would at once surrender their fort; but in the meantime it was an abominable shame that so few men were left for their protection. When Oglethorpe returned she would never cease insisting on his leaving the service until she prevailed upon him to do so. His brother was a very old childless man, possessed of a fine estate, which must come to them, so that there was no need for Guy continuing longer in that horrid country." In the meantime her violent and tyrannical conduct to the native servants was a constant source of uneasiness to Violet, who, having brought with her from her early home her father's sentiments concerning the West India slave trade, so happily abolished a few years before, could not treat her ayahs

with the harshness and contempt shown by many who ought to have known better. In the early part of their being together, she ventured on a mild remonstrance, which was met on Letty's part by a request that she would attend to her own affairs, and not presume to interfere with uncalled-for advice.

Altogether it was a wretched time. The weather was sultry and unwholesome, and Violet ill and feverish, full of nervous fears and forebodings of evil; while Letty, though professing to be quite easy concerning the fate of her husband, was much alarmed for their own, left with so few Europeans to defend them. She began to give way to habits of self-indulgence only too common to her countrywomen in India at that time, and Violet saw less and less of her, nor regretted that it was so.





